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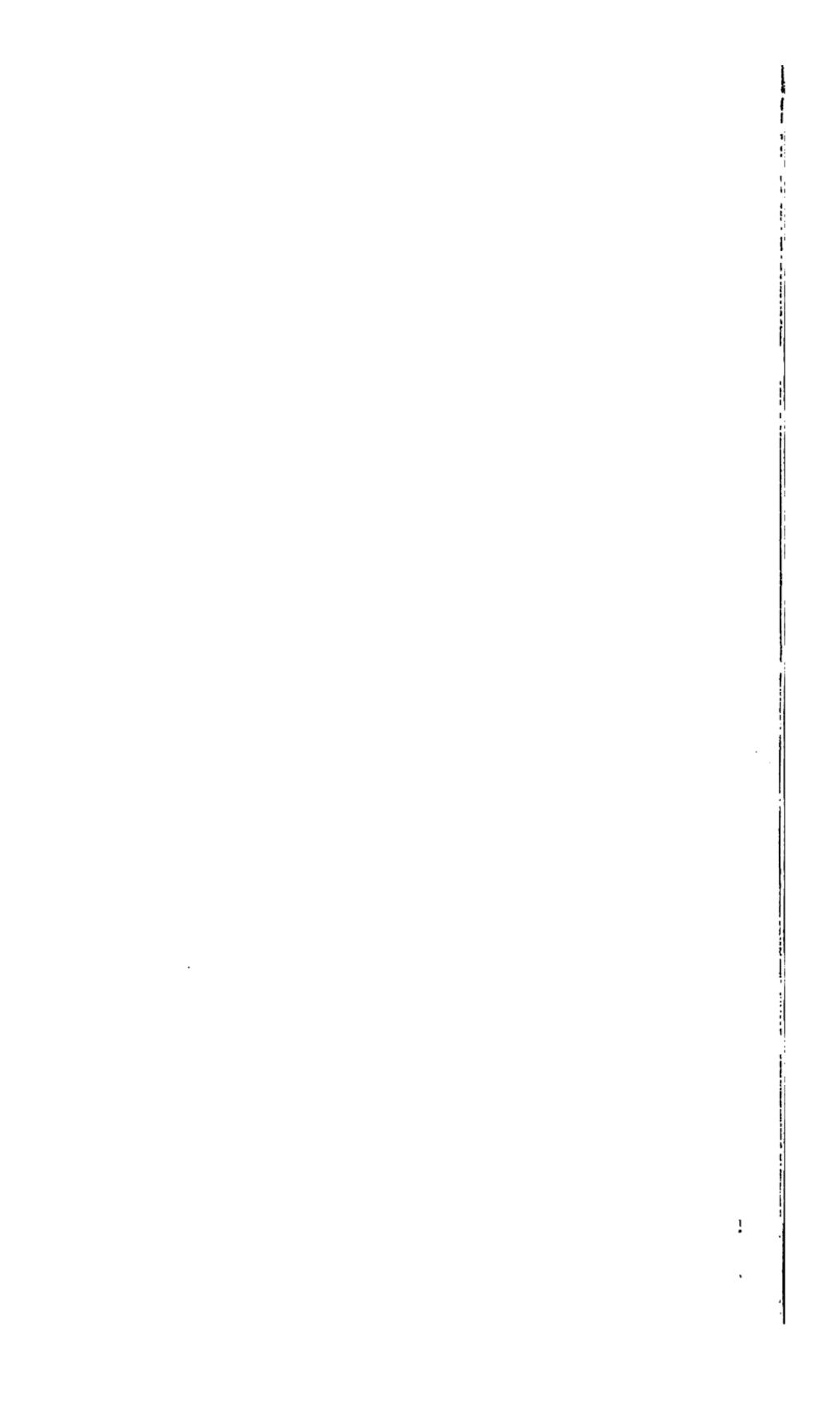
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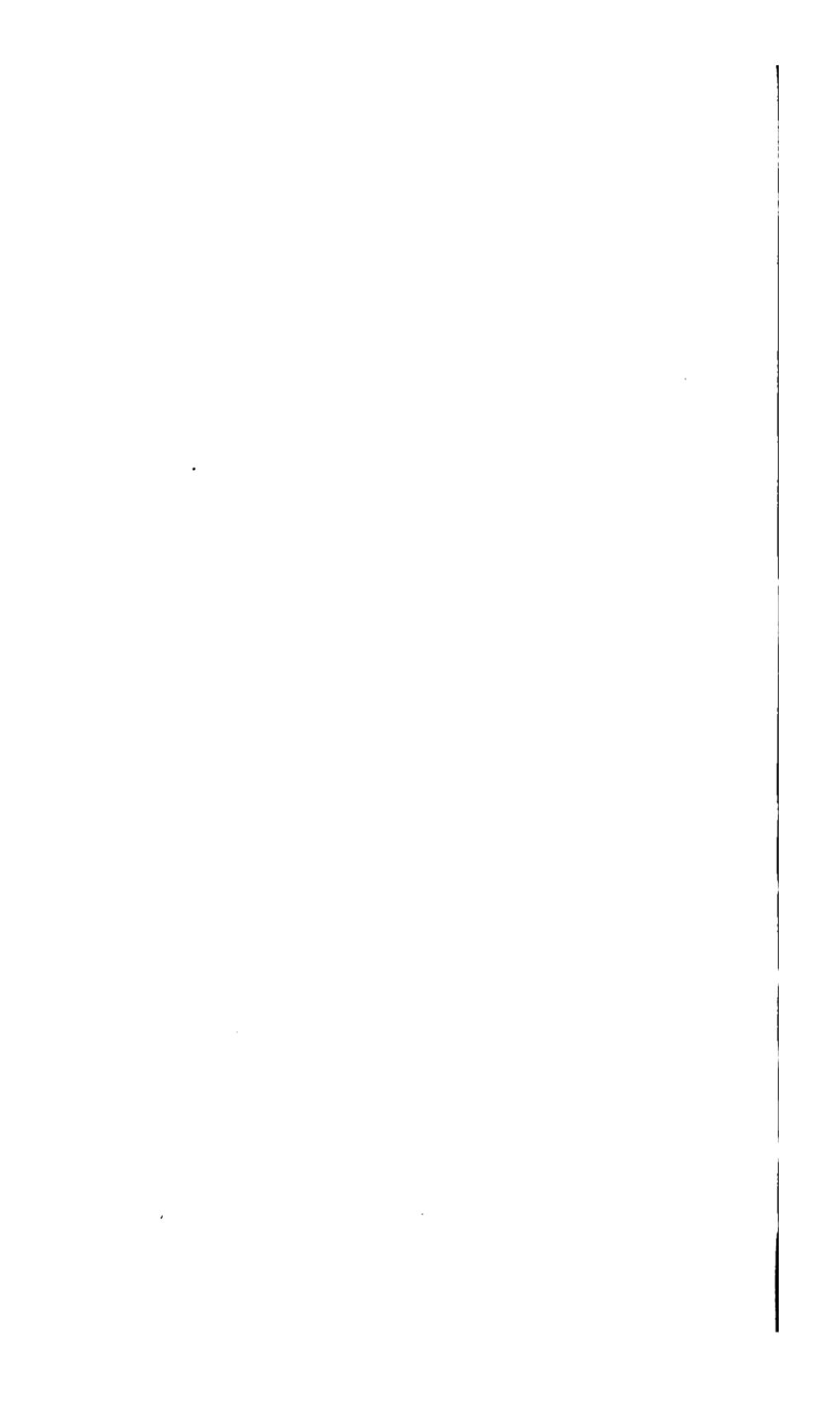
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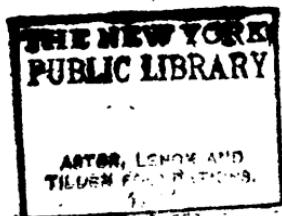


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THE PRIORS OF PRAGUE.

W. Neale

BY

THE AUTHOR OF

“CAVENDISH,” “WILL WATCH,” &c. &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

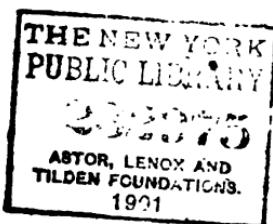
VOL. II.

“I write a careless kind of good-humoured Shandean book, which will do your hearts good—and your heads too,—provided you understand it.” STEENKE.

PHILADELPHIA:

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1836.



BOOK THE FOURTH,

CONTINUED.

CHAPTER I.

Which narrates how I found myself suddenly elevated to the golden honours of a physician, and the sharp dangers of surgery, in one visit.

HAVING arrayed myself according to the directions of Plausible, I proceeded to the front door, and found a gaily painted vehicle in waiting, with a man-servant in a handsome livery. I at once took my seat, and was soon joined by the doctor, who assumed the reins, and at a smart pace drove through the city.

At first I almost suspected, that by some mistake I had got beside a Chinese mandarin.—Nod, nod, went the doctor's head, first on one side, and then, nod, nod on the other; and this with a due proportion of distance, familiarity, or respect, as the carriage which we passed might happen to be drawn by one or two horses,—to seem rich or poor. The pedestrians did not indeed seem sufficiently happy to attract much of his regard; neither could I perceive that many of his bows were returned by those who rode in the coaches—a circumstance I afterwards found to be attributable to the learned gentleman's making it a rule always to bow to carriage people at a venture. For, in the first place, it gave the passers by, a great idea of his practice; next, the bows might be returned by mistake; and third, even if they were not, no one was supposed to know the reason. As for those to whom he really was known, he always made a dead shot at such game, by not only making a profound congee, but taking his hat clear off his shining pericranium—just as a well-bred man may honour a royal duke of his acquaintance.

Once or twice, indeed, it did fall out so *mal à propos* that

the doctor, in an anticipatory feeling, would give one of his nods familiar to a carriage, that, on passing, proved to have its shutters closed—but on these occasions he was never known to appear in the least sensible that he had paid his respect to an empty chaise. No—with eyes immovably fixed on something far beyond, he passed along, unmindful of aught so much beneath his attention.

As soon, however, as we got into the suburbs, and this part of his duty was over, he began to discuss with me the medical world in Bath.

Worthy man! with what critical acumen he had discovered the minutes foibles of them all. Difficult indeed is it to reward such discernment. Exquisite, in truth, though a little tedious, was the way in which he proved that not one of the profession in that city could hold a candle to his eminent friend, Dr. Bubblerius;—“and Dr. Bubblerius, let me tell you, sir,” summing up, and modestly eager to advance his friend’s reputation,—“Dr. Bubblerius, let me tell you, sir, as a medical man, and one of experience, is, I consider, very little inferior to myself,”

“Oh, hardly, sir,” said I.

“Yes, Mr. Wortley, yes,” ingenuously repeated Plausible; “he is, sir, I assure you, very little inferior—a very wonderful man is Dr. Bubblerius!”

Humph! thought I;—I wonder what sort of a hand he is at breaking darning needles in old women’s backs.

“To which of the waters does that old blockhead, Solid, belong?” demanded Plausible, interrupting my silence.

“Waters, sir! Truly, I know not, unless it be to some of the distilled waters—or perhaps, it may be, to the strong waters.”

“Ah, sir, I see you don’t understand me. And is it possible that you can have lived so long in Bath, without knowing that every medical man—that is, of any pretensions to practice—patronises one of the three great springs—the Old spring, the New spring, and the True spring? Is it possible you are so ignorant that what action is to eloquence, so with us are the waters to medicine? Waters—waters—waters. We eat the waters, sir; we drink the waters,—swear by the waters!”

“Indeed, sir! Well, now, I knew you lived by the waters, and I thought you often killed by the waters; but I did not know before that your practice was altogether so watery as you describe it.”

“Oh, sir, we should do nothing without the waters.”

"Ah!—indeed, Doctor Plausible; then I dare say you use plenty of the fluid."

"Right, Mr. Wortley, right!—Make them drink, sir, make them drink. It amuses them, you know, if it does nothing else. Half the cases we have here—nay, two-thirds, or more, are lazy hypochondriacs, who fancy themselves into downright ill health from having nothing else to do. Now, the swallowing of a few gallons of salt-water, is an inestimable benefit to such people!"

"And a little to yourself, eh, Doctor?"

"Oh, sir, you mistake!" replied the learned gentleman, with an air of ineffable dignity; "the charms of medicine, sir, to a true professor, are those which the lovers of science can alone appreciate. By the by, old mother Wilson lives down that lane;—I may as well book her a journey to-day, —*iter*—five and sixpence—that'll not be so bad on the road to Lady Hottentot's. Mother Wilson, Mr. Wortley, is as fine a case of hip-joint as you could wish to see; some day I hope to show it you,—I haven't time to look at it just now.—John, hold the reins." And in popped Dr. Plausible, followed close at his heels by Dr. Wortley.

Bouncing into a comfortable parlour, we found an old woman of sixty sitting by the fire. "Good morning, good morning, Mrs. Wilson," bawled Plausible in his loudest tones, and speaking very quickly. "How d'ye do to-day, eh?—No better, I suppose." "Oh dear no, sir! No better, not at all!" "Ah, very well, that'll do then,—go on with the pill every night and the mixture every morning, and I'll see you again next week. Good morning, Mrs. Wilson." "A perfectly hopeless case that, Mr. Wortley," said Plausible, as the door closed and we drove off.

"What then, sir," said I, affecting to put on a long face, "don't you think that she'll pay her bill?" "Oh dear, yes! That old woman's bill, sir,—and a fine long one 'tis by the by!—is as good as Bank of England paper. The worst of it is, Mr. Wortley, I fear she can't hold out long."

"What, sir, must the golden egged goose die?"

"I fear it, indeed—Her long years of confinement have totally broken up her constitution beyond all powers of medicine to sustain."

"Then the daily mixture and pill you continue as a matter of conscience, I suppose."

"Yes, sir," replied Plausible, never dreaming of any quiz. "Yes, sir, it is our duty to sooth the decline of life.

Moreover, it is only charitable to grant any little indulgence or luxury in our power to those whose cases are hopeless."

"But to return to the point from which we started," resumed Plausible after a pause. "I was about to tell you, Mr. Wortley, that in Bath all the eminent practitioners are divided into as many parties as there are principal springs;—that is, the True-water party, the New-water party, and the Old-water party. Now, I have no hesitation in saying, that the only men worth listening to—worth looking at—are the True-water men. The rest, sir, are a mere set of blockheads—illiterate asses.—Doctor Bubblerius and myself are, of course,"—"Of course," said I,—the New-water party's leaders," resumed Plausible.

"I understood as much, sir."

"Exactly so; and you'll have an opportunity of forming your own opinions on our various practice. I say nothing; I never descend to those low arts of puffing by which some people get on. If I were a vain man, I might perhaps enjoy opportunities of indulging my foible—but that, sir, is a weakness I abhor. Bless me, if there isn't Dr. Bubblerius' carriage at Lady Hottentot's door already. To think if I should have kept him waiting!"

Lash after lash descended on his horse's back at the bare idea of such an atrocity; and on coming up, we found the great man just about to descend and enter.

Out sprang Plausible, proffering his arm in the very humblest manner, with many a hope and wish that his patron was himself this morning. Rendered into plain English, this meant to say, he hoped the doctor had chanced to go to bed sober; for report scrupled not to affirm that accidents of a contrary nature did sometimes happen to him.

These greetings being over, Plausible whispered a few words in the great Doctor's ear, and then introduced me as a young gentleman who was studying the profession, merely with a view to general information. My reception by Dr. Bubblerius was certainly very gracious,—I may say, even kind; and I soon found that he was one of those favoured men with whom we occasionally meet in the higher walks of life, who, although we have every just prejudice against them, still possess manners so fascinating, as for a time to compel our perfect tolerance, and in some cases even our regard.

We were now shown up to Lady Hottentot's chamber. She was the widow of an old nabob, who having settled at Bath, was over persuaded by his latter half to commit three

follies—accept of knighthood for the presentation of some idle address—make a will in his widow's favour—and die without revoking it.

The good creature had never been in India herself, but perhaps complexion is catching, for hers looked as though her spouse in his love had made a curry of it, and only died before it could be served to table.

“The very ugliest woman, her ladyship, I ever saw in my life!” whispered Plausible aside to me as we entered.

“Ah, Dr. Bubblerius!” began the invalid, “this is really kind of you; to come so far out of your town beat; and you so busy as I know you always are. Jenny, you stupid fool!” to her maid, “why don't you give the doctor a chair?”

“Really, my lady,” replied Bubblerius in his very blandest tones, and leaning over the settee as though his extreme politeness prevented his thinking of a seat until his respects were duly paid—“Really, my lady, you do me too much honour in making these apologies. Believe me, madam, I should be but too happy,” placing his hand over his heart, “to come to any distance—were it fifty miles—to wait upon one whom I have had the pleasure of knowing so long and so intimately as your ladyship!—Plausible,” turning aside to the apothecary, “what is the old devil's name?”

“Hottentot, doctor.”

“True; it had slipped me. Ah, lady Hottentot,” resumed Bubblerius with a nod of thanks to his informant, “I feel truly distressed to see you thus!—Permit me to feel your ladyship's pulse,”—sliding into the vacant chair almost imperceptibly. “Now tell me, my dear lady Hottentot, where do you feel pain?”

“All over, doctor.”

The doctor heaved a sigh, as if from the very bottom of his heart; but, too wise to say any thing, only gave a shake of his head, which was much to the purpose.

“All over? eh, my lady?” repeated Bubblerius, after a pause.

“Yes, doctor,—mine's a most distressing case.”

“So I perceive, madam!—Plausible—this was aside,—“didn't you mention something about this case to me before?”

“Yes, doctor,” replied Plausible, *sotto voce*, “I gave you the whole history of it last night. Don't you remember that case of monomania and supposed ascites.”

“Oh, ah!—Well, my dear lady Hottentot, we must see

if we can't do something for you. Just be kind enough, now, to detail your case to me."

"Ah, doctor! mine is, indeed, a very delicate case."

"Yes, your ladyship, we know that, but still to your medical adviser—"

"True, doctor, and it's a very important case—I may say of national importance."

"Exactly, madam.—You see, Mr. Wortley," turning to me, "the only way with these patients is to humour them;—listen now, and I'll be sworn you'll hear some monstrous absurdity;"—then turning to his patient, "Well, my dear lady Hottentot, proceed."

"Well, doctor, the fact is," lowering her voice to that whisper in which all important matters are generally communicated,—"the fact is, that just below here," placing her hand on her waist, "somehow or other, I am troubled with one of the great seas—now whether it's really the Atlantic, or only the German Ocean, I can't exactly determine. Therefore, my dear doctor, you perceive I've sent for you to tell me; as I hear that the German Ocean is now likely to become the seat of war, and if so, you know no time should be lost in writing to the Secretary of State; or my situation must become very precarious."

At this absurd jumble of lunatic ideas, I nearly laughed outright. Plausible himself, Stoic as he was, felt compelled to hide his face in the bed-curtains, while the gravity of Bubblerius was only sustained by his anger.

"Secretary of State! what the d—l's trouble is the old fool going to give us now?" muttered he to me; then addressing his patient,—"Give me leave to ascertain, madam."

After a slight pressure of the part affected, he put on a doubly solemn look, and said, "Your ladyship is perfectly right with regard to the existence of the sea, but you need be under no apprehension with regard to the German Ocean. No, madam! no, madam!—it is the Pacific which thus troubles you!"

"The Pacific! pshaw!—Doctor, you've got the Pacific yourself, I think; as to me, I'm sure you know nothing about the matter," exclaimed the 'dear Lady Hottentot,' suddenly pushing away her physician's hand, and replying with the ill-directed acuteness of a maniac—"Pacific, indeed! it can't be the Pacific; for I'm sure it's never quiet an hour in the day!"

"But, madam!" began Plausible, coming to the aid of

his chief—"Hold your tongue; what do you know about it?" interrupted the virago, cutting him as short as his master. "Here, my friend," addressing herself to me, "do you come and give me your opinion on the matter. You're a young doctor, and have not had time yet to get stupid as these old people."

"Why, madam," replied I, after some deliberation, and patting with my fingers in the true scientific style,—"if I might give an opinion differing from that of my learned and experienced friend, Dr. Bubblerius, I should say that it is the *mare internum*, or Mediterranean sea that now afflicts your ladyship."

"You're right, young man!" exclaimed she in triumph; "you're right—it is the Mediterranean sea!—how did you know it?"

This was a difficult question, and required great presence of mind; but taking courage, I replied, "Why, your ladyship will observe, that the sea in question has no tide—it is always at one height, and always agitated, more or less, which exactly accords with your ladyship's account."

"What's your name?" said the old woman, looking sharply up into my face. "Wortley, madam."

"Well then, Dr. Wortley, you're the ablest man in physic that I've met with for some time. Dr. Bubblerius!"

"Madam"

"Give this gentleman your cane this instant."

The doctor, with great good-nature, surrendered it into my hands.

"Oh, you have some sense left still, have you? Now, Dr. Wortley, your consultation-fee is five guineas;—here's ten, then. I shall give those other fellows nothing."

I bowed, and having received the money which she offered, I contrived unseen to put it into the hand of Bubblerius. This learned physician, as if utterly unconscious of my part of the transaction, merely slipped the coin into his breeches' pocket without a word, and then secured it with a button, as if to say, rest there in safety, my dear friends, you've met with sufficient dangers on the way.

Her ladyship now appeared pretty well satisfied, and asked my advice whether she should be tapped, to which, by Plausible's direction, I answered, yes. She then asked me to fix an hour for the operation, when, by the same suggestion, I named two o'clock on the ensuing day. To my horror and astonishment, she now told me that I must

tap her in person. Then saying she had enjoyed quite enough of our company, very abruptly wished us good morning.

This last proposal of my operating, quite turned the laugh against me, and put the other two in good humour.

After enjoying the joke of my confusion, they at first proposed that I should practise in the interval for my forthcoming part. I, on the contrary, strenuously declared that nothing should induce me thus to tamper with the life of a fellow-creature; and it was then agreed that I was, in the interim, to have some lucky fall, the which should be said, so seriously to injure my right arm as to render my playing first fiddle quite out of the question. In this case, it was agreed that Plausible should take the unenviable distinction attempted to be forced on myself.

As I don't intend again to refer to this case, it will suffice to say here, that on the appointed day Plausible operated on her, and she subsequently died—of course.

CHAPTER II.

Which treats of the different phases of the medical character.

On leaving the house of the esteemed and amiable Lady Hottentot, my instructors were called away by their duty to attend the Bath Hospital, to which, as medical officers, they both belonged.

Here, on our arrival, we found the élite of the medical world and many others, whom Plausible informed me, could by no means come within that title. As during my residence in Plausible's house, I often attended at this emporium of the faculty, it naturally resulted that the characters of all became more or less known to me.

And truly, I may almost say, that I saw the medical character in every phasis which it can assume.

A very brief period, indeed, sufficed for me to observe that the professional attendants of this charity were, in their sentiments, divided into numerous parties. Of these, two were particularly prominent, and into the ranks either of the one or the other, the minores were content on all momentous struggles to glide.

Here, as in the medical world at large, it was no longer a question between True, New, and Old wafers—but quite a different affair.

Opposed to the never sufficiently to be extolled Dr. Bubblerius, was Mr. Gregory. No two men could differ more. The one was straight as an arrow in his course—open, fearless, and true-hearted; the other, like a smooth, but deep and devious stream, the whole of whose existence was a sinuous meander, encroaching on all that was soft, and ever giving way to what was firm.

Dr. Bubblerius was the leading physician, Mr. Gregory the head-surgeon, of the hospital. No one could be more civil than Bubblerius to Gregory, and I am very safe in asserting, that no one could hate the latter more. On the other hand it was impossible to exceed the calm indifference with which the surgeon viewed the physician, and, at times, it was truly ludicrous to hear the careless nonchalance with which the former would reply to the most studied addresses of the latter.

The first and greatest offence for which Mr. Gregory was never to be forgiven, was that he had come, ay, absolutely unsolicited, to Bath, and there in a short space of time, had established a large practice, while, almost as atrocious, he made a point of never calling in a physician—prescribed rhubarb and antimony whenever he thought fit—laughed at apothecaries while he took their bread and butter from betwixt their fingers—and, after all this behaviour, actually styled himself a pure surgeon!

“His purity forsooth!” said they. His brother medicos proclaimed this a dose they could not swallow. “And after all this, sir, what do you think he did?” said one of his opponents in describing his conduct to me, “would you believe it, sir?—he actually set up his carriage!”

“Oh,” replied I, “if he did that!—”

“Did that? yes, that did he, sir; and to make the matter worse—ten times worse—a few days afterwards, he went and paid the builder for it.”

“Impudent rogue!” said I.

“Sir, you’re right!” returned my informant—“you have just notions of things!—you’re a man of my kidney!—come and dine with me to-morrow.”

But to return, Mr. Gregory was a man formed to compel success—of great judgment, penetration and good sense. One who had seen the world, and could profit by his knowledge;—with what is still more rare, the most indefatigable spirit of industry.

At that time a pure surgeon, or one who confined himself to operations, and yet, when ever necessary for his patient, prescribed as freely as a physician—was a practitioner of comparatively rare occurrence, and only to be found in large and richly populated cities; and requiring more than ordinary nerve from the additional difficulty of getting into practice.

The argument held by them was to this effect. They saw no reason why they should be inferior to the physician in point of education, for capability in their line of the profession required even more knowledge of the humane frame than that which the mere practice of medicine demanded.

"In physic," said they, "a few blunders matter little; for, gentlemen, the results of the error are rarely traced home, and the cause therefore passes unsuspected. In surgery, the case is widely different. Here, gentlemen, your works are open, and liable to the judgment of all the world. In addition to this argument, they were paid for their attendance, and not by the odious method of how much medicine they could get their unhappy patients to swallow."

On the other hand, it was contended by the physicians, and often not without reason, that your pure surgery advocates were often carried away by the enthusiasm of carving, to neglect the sublimities of dosing.

Stand the truth as it might between these two factions of dosers and carvers, party spirit run to the extreme. What a motley collection of individual peculiarities did I not see! Scarcely had I entered the hospital with Plausible and Bubblerius, when they were surrounded by a numerous and most obsequious staff of dependants and admirers.

Plausible immediately assumed the part of a great man, and gave himself innumerable airs, while Bubblerius, to whom the thing was a matter of too constant occurrence, received all their pretty little speeches with his usual suavity.

Stepping, however, out of the circle to an old gentleman of most antique costume and outré appearance, he seized his hand with such a show of kindness that I set them down at once as the most cordial haters of each other. "My dear sir, I am delighted to have the pleasure of seeing you still able to revisit the field of your former glories," exclaimed Bubblerius.

"Thank ye, doctor, thank ye!" returned the other who had once been the head surgeon, and had now retired with a handsome fortune,—"thank ye," in the squeaking of a

true Thersites, "how does the world wag with you, doctor? D'ye think ye do much good, eh?"

"Why, at least, sir, we try to alleviate the ills of life, and as for the good, you know, we do as much of that as we can."

"Devilish little that, I'm thinking, doctor."

Then thrusting his tongue in his cheek, as soon as Bublerius turned away,—"never could do much of that in your best of days!"

This joke was addressed to the young carvers, who seemed to relish it greatly. The dosers, on the contrary, returned it with sullen looks, and stalked away in the rear of their chief.

The whole assemblage now separated in two divisions to go round the wards of the hospital; the dosers on the physician's side; the carvers on the surgeon's.

"There they go to their triumphs," said the old surgeon, as he saw them move off. "The triumphs of David and Saul—and faith pretty much as usual, for though Saul may have slain his thousands, David's are the tens of thousands." This I soon found to be a hit at a young physician of the latter name, whose love of new medicines and perseverance in bad ones, contributed not a little to people the shades below.

When I attended the hospital, he had just taken a violent affection for quassia, and the more they tried to persuade him of its deleterious and poisonous qualities, the more he stuck to it, no matter what the disease.

"Ah, poor fellow!" was his exclamation on getting hold of a new patient. "He wants tone, Mr. Snook," to the house apothecary, "see that this person gets my infusion quassiae ligni." By and by the patient was reported much worse. "Mr. Snook!" said the physician.

"Sir," said Mr. Snook.

"See that the strength of that quassia is doubled." The patient proved as obstinate as his doctor, and took it into his head to die.

"Ah, poor man!" quoth Doctor David. "They always will delay coming in here till it's too late—a pity we couldn't have had that patient to strengthen a little sooner!"

Sometimes quassia was exchanged for columba-root, and not unfrequently for laurel-water, and, generally, with the same happy result. If, on the contrary, his patients proved so iron of heart as to laugh at this, his never-failing stronghold was the liquor arsenicalis. His underlings, at last, felt their consciences pricked, and either left out his dar-

ling drugs, or greatly diluted them. But this he discovered, and to catch them at their tricks would frequently taste the medicine—though he never was known by any mistake to swallow it.

In direct opposition to David was Dr. Heavystern. This gentleman, under an unpromising exterior, concealed a great deal of fun. It was frequently his custom, to alight from his carriage, walk through the hospital, visit the bedside of every patient, just touch his hat to the attending medical officer of the day, and then drive away again without uttering a single syllable. Not unfrequently, some of his assistants would propose to administer certain remedies.

"You may as well leave these things alone, gentlemen," was his answer, "they do the patient no good—not in the least."

What might do the patient good, he rarely condescended to explain. When any one ventured to tell him of a new medicine, unless the informant was Dr. David, he always replied, "Pooh, pooh, sir! give your patients a little saw-dust—depend upon it 'twill do them much more benefit, and won't be half so nasty!"

To David, however, his conduct was quite different; nothing delighted him more than to go and ask the Israelitish physician, if there was any thing lately invented in medicine that was worth knowing.

"Oh, yes," the other would reply, giving a list of half-a-dozen new roots, extracts, oils, and salts.

"Have ye got any of them to spare, Dr. David?"

"No, I haven't just yet, but a particular friend of mine has promised to send me some down from London; I expect them in a day or two, for he's taking particular pains to get them good."

"That's right!" Heavystern would reply, "be sure you exhibit them in large doses—I'll be bound you live to see the effects—that is, if you don't take any yourself!"

The last was a gentle sort of aside, accompanied with a dignified nod, that left the other fully persuaded how greatly his style of practice was the admiration of his senior. That senior in turn, however, was fairly open to censure himself, since what we termed his "silent system," was merely prudence degenerated into neglect.

He was once known in private practice to have been called in to a whimsical lady. He chatted with her for half an hour, took a two-guinea fee, and was in the act of closing the drawing-room door, when she exclaimed—"But Dr. Heavystern, you've forgotten the chief object of your visit —my ill health."

"Ah, madam!" replied he, with infinite pathos, and looking at the gold, "that is such a very interesting subject, I could not think of discussing it at the end of a visit, so we'll reserve it for the beginning of the next—see you again to-morrow, madam."

Some people enjoy a peculiar license, and this, which would have ruined many men, was told as a good story of him. In truth, for a melancholy example of this position, I need not have wandered very far from the same room.

Among the many who came to the hospital to watch cases, was one who seemed really to study his profession. We afterwards became acquainted, and I found I had not been deceived in him.

His whole heart and soul—and a noble soul it was—were devoted to the mastery of the science by which he had once hoped to procure affluence. Alas! he found it insufficient to ensure him even bread!

He was born of a good English family, with a small patrimony. Being of a studious turn, his choice of a profession fell on medicine—and, when rightly exercised, surely none can be more dignified or more exalting. Determined to qualify himself to the utmost, he took a degree at Oxford, studied in London, spent some years abroad, and stored up a vast fund of information from almost every quarter to which it was possible to have access.

Ignorant, however, of the world, except from books, and sanguine as to the future, he entered on a marriage of affection, chose Bath as a place of residence, and imagined he had only to enter the field of practice to obtain that due share of its rewards to which his talents and acquirements justly entitled him.

Alas! he soon found how slightly estimated by mankind is mere desert. A thousand petty meannesses were daily disclosed to his view to which he could never condescend; or if, for the sake of his family, he could bring himself to their level, still he could not, despite himself, contrive to enter into them with that degree of art which was necessary to turn them to account.

In addition to this, he was cursed with that frequent failing of an elevated mind—timidity. Many an opportunity of pushing himself forward passed by him unimproved, from a diffidence and hesitation that should rather have commanded respect, than have brought ruin.

How often have I not seen him, walking through the wards, minutely inquiring into cases that the large practice

of others had caused them to neglect, offering to the poor sufferers all the consolation and tenderness in his power, when, Heaven knows, the feelings of his own heart must have been such as no sickness could ever equal.

Painfully did I contrast his haggard cheek and shrunken form with the bloated carcasses of the numerous quacks that moved around him. Then, too, rose to my mind's eye, the weary vigil devoted to study and the sleepless pillow, where the rude cares of the morrow broke in to disturb a hardly-earned repose.

His young and beautiful wife, and the two prattling infants I had seen climbing on his knee, mingled in these reveries, for, though ignorant of the fact himself, it required but little scrutiny to perceive that their only protector was already advanced in a decline.

Such is the ignorance of the world! To presume to its favour is too often to win, while only to deserve is too frequently to lose it!

Poor Hebert!—He was rarely seen in the society of any one, unless in that of an eccentric genius who was little calculated either by precept or example, to supply what in his friend was wanting. The gentleman to whom I allude was a Scotchman of considerable genius, great wit and humour, with more of the Irish character about him than the Scotch.

Perfect master of his profession, he chose to hold it in contempt, because it occasionally requires that a man should shut his eyes. To him it was more agreeable to live on a small independence, and occasionally tell a patient to go to the d—l, than work steadily on, and with little labour to himself draw in a revenue of thousands.

Scarcely ever did it fall to the lot of one to have had so many opportunities of fortune as in a life of great vicissitude had chanced to him, and never were opportunities turned to such slight account. If a patient went to call on him, it was no unfrequent thing for his servant to tell you that his "master was in his painting room, and couldn't be disturbed."

Perhaps your case was urgent, and you took the liberty of sending in your name—ten to one but you heard yourself referred to that dark practitioner below, with whom men are sometimes very much pleased to be on speaking, but rarely on visiting terms.

I was once in his studio, when some testy old officer raised the blockade, and forcing his way in, snappishly exclaimed, "Really, Dr. Sanderson, this is too bad!—you've

taken my case in hand, and I have every right to expect that you'll see me to the end of it." "Oh," replied Sanderson, if that's all you want, Dr. Bubblerius is your man. But come now, my dear colonel, I know you're an obliging as well as a reasonable fellow, so just take this"—giving him a rough brush filled with blue paint, with which he had been doing in the ground work of a sky—"sit ye down upon the first chair, and brush your hat with it, till I can tell you what you're to have next."

The patient flung a guinea on the carpet most indignantly, and strode to the door, just as he was slamming which, the doctor, without looking from his canvass, cried out, "Good morning, colonel!—why, you're rather in a hurry."

Then turning round to me—"Now, young gentleman, I shan't be bothered with that friend very speedily again."—And truly, never did there live a man who had such a knack of getting rid of all his friends as the doctor—no wonder—yet strange to say, few men were so much liked or admired.

After all, he was a most pleasant fellow, despite of his faults. He had visited each quarter of the globe, had travelled over the whole of Europe, spoke seven languages, and was conversant more or less with every branch of either science or philosophy—all that could either instruct or amuse. As for books, he almost equalled that Florentine walking library, whose name I have forgotten—but perhaps you will remember. You could scarcely name a book to the doctor, of which he could not give you the history and particulars; yet, with all these acquirements, few men ever committed a greater number of silly, foolish actions.

Though the preceding was often his conduct to his richer patients, yet to the poor, to whom his advice was gratuitously given, together with means of following it, no being could be more kind, and by many of them he was adored. Strangely inconsistent is our nature at the best. He was the author of many works, medical and others, one which, embracing an immense field of research, was dedicated to upholding the system of animate contagion, once prevalent among the ancients.

Yet all this knowledge lay by like idle lumber; of value to no one for want of use. Any thing the most remote from his own duties, seemed to give him the greatest pleasure. I remember his employing weeks in ascertaining, by experiment, whether hemp could not be manufactured from hop vines;—at another period, indigo was to be got from the beau plant. One morning, also, he solemnly assured me that he had

discovered the mode of realizing a fortune of one or two millions, "if any one were desirous of such trash!"

I asked what his discovery might be—he assured me it was a machine for cutting down the aboriginal forests of the new world, at the rate of three trees a minute—that the wood of the trunks was next to be reduced to potash—and then by a peculiar process—his, of course—to saltpetre—"Which you know, my dear sir, to a warlike country like this, is a subject of great cominefce and expensive price. But just excuse my saying more to you at present, for I see Hebbert coming up the street, and I hope he's bringing me a particular specimen of the scarabæus, which I want to paint for a plate in my new book,"—So off went the genius at a tangent.

Such and so varied were many of the new profession in which I suddenly found myself engaged. I doubt not, in so large a city, there were many others with characters equally marked, but the above formed the most distinct of those with whom I came in contact, and though to a general view they all belonged to one class, yet how widely different was each from the rest!

To an idle man like myself, the observation of individual peculiarities has often proved most amusing. Nor is it altogether uninstructive. But my story demands I should proceed—and in my next chapter I think it not unlikely that I may comply with its request.

CHAPTER III.

Which shows how Dr. Plausible painted in caustic, and the great effect produced by the same.

THE time in which I had amused myself with making the observations contained in the preceding chapter had passed away very pleasantly, when one of Plausible's pre-eminently happy cases so touched my conscience, that I began to think I had had enough of medicine.

To this prudent idea some other matters happened to give great additional weight.

It was on a Sunday morning, just as Plausible and myself

were lounging over our breakfast, that a patient was announced in the surgery. On repairing thither we found a stout individual who, if we might judge from the good casing of his outward man, was well to do in the world. Plausible immediately addressed him in one of his accustomed florid and periphrastic speeches, which being briefly rendered into the mother tongue, was as much as to say, "I'm the man that can cure any thing."

"After a manner," mentally added I, "cum grano salis." However, the stout patient contented himself with saying, "He was glad to hear it—for that he was at present mighty bad."

"Oh! never mind that," returned Plausible.—"So much the better; it is from such patients as you that I gain all my credit in practice." Encouraged by the doctor's condescending kindness, the patient now said that his name was Smith, and that he had come to complain of a severe ulcerated sore throat.

"Ha! ha! and I doubt well deserving of complaint it is—we must send that fellow off with a mittimus—give him notice to quit," returned Plausible, carrying on the joke. "Sit down here, sir, and let me examine the affected part. Ha! you're right, my friend, it is a very severe attack you've had. See, Mr. Wortley, this is as fine a case of the sort as you could wish to see."

Accordingly I looked, and certainly if any thing of the sort could be fine, it was doubtless as fine as a moderate-minded man could desire.

After a few questions as to the manner in which it came on, Plausible assured the poor fellow that it would soon be remedied, touched up the edges of the part with a little caustic, for the sake of the patient, and gave him a mixture to stick down in the bill, for the sake of himself. These preliminaries being satisfactorily arranged, he told him to take no trouble in stirring out of the house to-morrow, as he should be driving past the door, and would very kindly come and call upon him.

Having seen the stout patient wrap his throat well up in shawls, I opened the surgery door to let him out; strongly tempted at the moment to say—"If you have any sense in that thick head of yours, you'll forbear to thrust it into this trap again."

"Mr. Wortley," said Plausible, as soon as we were alone—"remind me to get a camel-hair pencil, the first

thing to-morrow morning; I want to use it for that man; I find the caustic holder is too clumsy a mode of dealing with so nice an affair. And while I think of it, just oblige me by preparing a small quantity of saturated solution of the nitrate of silver. For if a drachm or two of lunar caustic were to slip down that fellow's throat, it would not be so comfortable as his morning dram."

Monday morning came. I reminded Dr. Plausible of his stout patient, and the ingenious mode by which he proposed to torture him, and faithful to his intention, we sallied forth to the shop of a large print and drawing seller. Only one stranger was present besides ourselves, and his back was turned.

"Show me some camel-hair pencils," said Plausible, in the loud authoritative tone that was common to him.

At the sound of his voice, the stranger turned and presented the countenance of Mr. Gregory.

"Good morning, Dr. Plausible"—"Good morning, Mr. Gregory," were the salutations exchanged. The brushes were now produced, and Plausible, with more fuss than was at all necessary, proceeded to choose one.

"What," said Gregory, "has Sanderson inoculated you with his rage for painting?"

"Hardly, Mr. Gregory, hardly!—No, sir, I have at present a very, a—a—a very remarkably fine case of a sort of *cynanche tonsillaris*,"—giving the disease a name that it by no means deserved.

"Indeed, Dr. Plausible!"

"Yes, Mr. Gregory; and in order to get a severe ulcer to close over, I want one of these fine camel-hair brushes, just to touch the extreme edges with caustic;—making a flourish with the brush as he spoke. Gregory returned this with a smile of contempt, and while, as was his custom, he went on tapping the ground with his stick, he proceeded to put one or two questions as to the cause of the attack.

"Humph!" said he, looking down on the ground as soon as these were answered, and evidently not a little amused at something.—"Now does it not strike you, on reconsidering the matter, Dr. Plausible, that this throat is of secondary importance?—not the cause, but merely the effect, and that it would be much wiser to attack the former, and for the present leave the latter to itself?"

"Oh no!—dear no!" replied Plausible, in a ready tone of over-confidence, as if he had Gregory at fault, and was

now giving him some good advice, without in truth having had time fully to comprehend the very sensible objection that had been urged.

"Oh no, Mr. Gregory, I can assure you, sir, from my experience, that you have only to touch the edges lightly,"—with another flourish of the pencil,—"the wound will quickly disappear, and the patient get quite well.—Perhaps you may not have such a case in your practice, and would like to observe this process of treatment?—if so, at any time I should be most happy to call with you!"

"Thank you, sir," said Gregory, bowing to the ground, as if most deeply obliged, yet smiling still. "I suppose, Dr. Plausible, you are quite conversant with the anatomy of the part?"

"Of course! of course! Mr. Gregory!"

"And the internal carotid, Dr. Plausible, that runs so close—a dangerous fellow, that, to have for a neighbour if any thing goes wrong."

"Of course! of course!"

"Very well then," said the surgeon, "I wish you success—good morning, Dr. Plausible."

"Good morning, Mr. Gregory," and we parted.

In a few minutes we were in the little parlour of Mr. Smith—a close confined cabin; the stout patient himself leaning over the roasting fire, like a huge cucumber stewing.

The usual compliments having passed, and Plausible having given one or two gentle notes upon his own horn in his accustomed mode—since the decease of Stronglungus, his worthy and regretted trumpeter—we proceeded to the examination of our happy patient.

Strange to say, we found his condition rather worse than better. Plausible looked wise, cautious, and puzzled by turns, but to have bought his brush and not to use it!—Cruel mortification!—he could not undergo it.—So after one or two flourishes, and a touch at each flourish, which ensured it as an item in said Smith's account, we ordered him another mixture, replaced him carefully over the fire, and told his nurse when he was done enough, to take him off and put him to bed.

Day after day this sort of thing continued, until from looking first at the throat and then at its doctor, I grew quite undecided as to which might prove the worst evil of the two to our friend Smith. Though I need not have doubted this after so long an acquaintance with the doctor's

practice. Very speedily I observed that Plausible always gave me the go by, with regard to this patient,—contriving to sneak off and see him alone,—he ceased to speak of “that splendid case of sore throat,”—and, what was more symptomatic—even to order “that Mr. Smith’s mixture.”

I now pretty well guessed how affairs were going, when Plausible one morning came home looking very pale, and after a little hesitation begged me to run quickly for Mr. Gregory, and entreat his attendance for a consultation on “that distressing case” of Mr. Smith.

Oh, ho, thought I, you have changed your note! Taking up my hat, I set off without loss of time. Mr. Gregory was, as I feared, out of the way.—At last I managed to find him, and with great kindness he accompanied me on the instant, making no reply to my statement but by a melancholy shake of the head.

On arriving at Smith’s, we found the patient up stairs in bed, and Plausible pacing to and fro the parlour, evidently much agitated—we moved up stairs, and at the sight of Mr. Smith I was inconceivably shocked.—He was very much wasted—exceedingly flushed, and with a hard quick, small, jerking pulse.

As to the immediate evil, that had increased frightfully.—Gregory took a brief but cool and attentive survey of the case, and having slowly uttered the words “very well,” quitted the room to speak with Plausible below.

“Well, Mr. Gregory, what do you think of him?” timidly inquired the doctor.

“Exactly what I thought some days ago; you have been attacking and aggravating the result, while the cause has been allowed to go unchecked. The only hope for your patient is, to have recourse without delay, to alterative medicines.”

“But, Mr. Gregory, he is now too weak to bear them.”

“Yes, I fear he is; and in that case, nothing can save him—he must die.”

Plausible seemed for an instant horror-stricken, and sinking into a chair, wiped the drops from his brow. “Don’t take it so much to heart,” said Gregory, very kindly, “we are all subject to errors in judgment occasionally; and to show you, that even the greatest men are not always exempt from misfortunes of this kind, I will give you a case that I witnessed in one of the great London hospitals.

“The surgeon to whom this occurred, was confessedly the first of his day—one whose name will be long and de-

servedly a very high authority. A clerk in a banker's office came to him, and complained of a large tumour in the axilla or arm-pit. He stated his income to be some two hundred-and-fifty a-year, on which he supported with comfort, a wife and large family. He desired to know if the tumour could be removed without danger; if it could, he would have it extracted; if it could not, it should remain, as it gave the clerk little or no pain, and had been growing since childhood.

"The surgeon laughed at the danger; said there was none; and in order to lessen the expense, kindly offered, on the clerk's coming into the hospital, to operate gratis. I witnessed the operation; the tumour was far more deeply imbedded than was expected; it took three quarters of an hour to extract, and this from its surrounding the nerves so intimately, gave a severe shock to the frame. The patient was a strong hale man. On the ensuing morning, when the surgeon came to see him, the pulse was almost extinct—the man evidently sinking, and, in fact, nature had never made even an effort to rally. The patient looked up in the surgeon's face, and faintly said, 'Ah, sir, I'm a dying man!'

"'Oh, I hope not, my good fellow!' replied the former.

"'Yes, but I am, sir,' returned the clerk, 'and you knew it! How *could* you tell me there was no danger? When I'm gone, what in the name of God is to become of my poor wife and children?' The surgeon looked at him for a moment—appeared very much shocked, then turned away his head, and walked down the ward. Poor fellow! the next day his sufferings were at an end.

"Every man, Dr. Plausible, who has an extensive practice, must bear his share of these trials; only the knowledge of their probability should make us doubly careful.

"I admit this is a melancholy case, and it is, perhaps, unfortunate that you did not think of revising your opinion before. However, you are master of my views of the subject, and if you will let me know when I can be of any farther use to you, I shall be most happy.

"I see," drawing out his watch, "I am already late for an engagement, so perhaps you will excuse me for the present."

Plausible rose, and faltering out his thanks, we returned home without a word, and I must say this for Plausible, he felt that case, as he deserved, most severely.

During the rest of the day, he remained silent and dejected; and scarcely had he got to bed, when with a violent

ringing some one came, desiring his instant attendance on his patient.

As I knew all the circumstances, he, of course, felt no hesitation as to my witnessing the result, and preferring perhaps, not to go alone, he called me up also. On arriving at Smith's, we found that the injured parts had extended more deeply than it was possible from mere external examination to discover. These had involved the outer coats of the large artery, palpitating close beside them, and to such a degree, that a sudden turn in bed had ruptured it completely.

I need not add, that frightful hemorrhage took place upon the instant, and death ensued without the possibility of averting it.

Long before our arrival all was over. The scene may be imagined. It was sufficiently dreadful, and we hurried home without exchanging a single word; no sooner, however, had we entered the surgery than, what with self-reproach, and what with horror at the late sight, Plausible fell into the first chair and fainted.

The trouble of bringing him to himself, perhaps, saved me from a similar fate. Having called his wife to my assistance, and seen him safely to his room, I retired to my own, swallowed a tumbler full of wine, and so got to sleep; but long, indeed, was it, before the images of that night ceased to haunt my dreams.

CHAPTER IV.

Which shows how and why the great Bubblerius gave grand parties.

On the evening ensuing the events described in the last chapter, Bubblerius gave a grand party. In one of these he was accustomed to indulge about every three months, and, in proportion to the rarity of the affair, so was its magnificence increased.

As he was in the habit of going out very much himself, he of course had a great number to invite in return. His rooms were always, therefore, well crowded, his society

considerably mixed, and as the suppers were on a scale of liberality approaching to profusion, his lady's turns-out were thought very fine.

With respect to his own profession, though he had the bad taste to affect shyness of the cloth, you were still sure to meet every practitioner who had any opportunities of calling him in to a "good case;" and hence, among those who wished to laugh at him, his routes were termed medical spreads.

I must, however, do him the justice to say, that he always adhered most exclusively to his party; and that, among his medical guests, none beside the "true well set," were by any chance admitted; while for the "carvers,"—such rogues were excommunicated to a man. I need not say, Plausible was among the most punctual of the great man's attendants, and in this instance assured me that he made a point of going, to efface, if possible, certain feelings left upon his mind by the preceding night.

The great doctor, in his turn, remembered me, and I had in perspective the pleasure of handing in and handing out Mistress Plausible, &c., &c., &c. These dangerous honours being at length fairly accomplished, I took leave to stroll through the well-lighted rooms of the "true water physician."

I had not proceeded far, however, when the beautiful figure of his wife caught my eye. My bow to her was very graciously returned, and, admirer as I am of the charms of the fairer part of the creation, it would, indeed, have been very hard, had I not paused to gaze on this specimen of its loveliness. She was dancing with a lord somebody, said by every body to be one of her most devoted slaves. Be that as it may, few ever seemed more enraptured with a golden chain, and I thought, as I looked on, that any man might have been proud to wear it. The dance having concluded, I found myself following, as if perforce, the object of my admiration.

While gazing thus delighted, I heard the well-known voice of Bubblerius, proceeding in its loudest tones from a small study that opened off the room in which we were.

"Emily, love!" cried he, "have you any commands for the marquis?"

Emily, love, replied in her own sweet tones, "No, dear."

Presently Bubblerius cried out, "Emily, darling! I'm

writing to the Earl of Waterfield,—what shall I say for you?"

"Only say that I'm quite well, love," replied the blooming Emily. Once more the promenade was resumed, and after what would, in Ireland, be termed "a *dacent*" interval, the first voice was again heard.

"Emily, pet, didn't you say that you would go to Oster-ton next week? If so, I'd better mention it now in my letter to his lordship."

"Oh yes, do!" said the pet, giving one of her brightest smiles to her handsome cavalier.

"Ah, and such smiles!—any one of them might have given a man the heart-ache for a fortnight! So fearing I might commit some extravagance if I remained much longer in such dangerous society, I ventured to explore the little study whence all this vocal grandeur had proceeded.

There sat Bubblerius, in all the pride of letters!—Paper strewed around, beneath, and above him, and he himself writing as though he had not another hour in the week in which to despatch his noble and voluminous correspondence.

Excellent quack! thought I, what an irreparable loss was sustained by Punch and Judy, when thou wert born above the sphere of a showman!

CHAPTER V.

Shows how one should be qualified to act as surgeon in a duel; and how the happiness of man may be disturbed by the powers of the air.

HAVING listened sufficiently to this amusing display of the great doctor, I turned to mingle once more with the dancers; in doing so I passed two gentlemen evidently speaking in anger. Their tones were not loud, but of that deep, earnest nature that still more powerfully denotes excited passion.

Their words were few, the last quite inaudible, and with looks of mutual defiance they separated. The whole of

this transaction passed almost more quickly than it can be told.

They had been standing in a window, and doubtless deemed their conduct unnoticed, which I believe it was, except by myself. As soon as the disputants had departed their separate ways, I looked on at the gay beings, fluttering about in all the hues and appearances of joy, and after musing briefly on this little scene, I dismissed from my mind the conversation I had witnessed as a matter of no moment.

Scarcely had I done so, when, to my astonishment, Bubblerius himself came up, and laid his hand on my shoulder.

"A very unpleasant affair has just occurred," said he.

"I am sorry for it," said I, for, like the rest of the world, it cost me little to be sorry.

"Yes, Mr. Wortley, so am I," rejoined Bubblerius, "but as you can be of use to us in this affair, I have ventured to trouble you."

"I of use, Dr. Bubblerius, you surprise me!"

"A fact though, my dear sir, as you shall hear. Two gentlemen—guests of mine to-night, have just met, it seems after a separation of some time abroad. Having a quarrel to adjust between them, it would appear that common politeness forced them to do this in my house. Their kindness, upon my word, I feel to be excessive. They have even done me the honour of requesting my attendance in the field. That you see was forgetting a physician's sphere. I promised to get a surgeon for them. You have no stake in Bath; will you go?"

"But, Dr. Bubblerius, I know nothing of practical surgery."

"So much the better for you, since if either of them should get shot, you have only to shake your head and say, how sorry you are that your art cannot avail them."

"But, Dr. Bubblerius, do consider, such conduct would be far from correct."

"Oh, my dear fellow, as to correctness, you know, like beauty, it's all a matter of opinion. It may be this or it may be that; besides, my dear sir, you don't understand the rule of these affairs. Men never shoot one another now—it's not etiquette. Fifty fellows go out in these days—fight and fire—miss, of course. Perhaps not even that; for lately we have seen '*gallant*' captains go out and never fire after all—but only write instead of fight—though seemingly they came all the way from France on purpose. No, sir, all that the

surgeon has to do is to keep his appointment—quite by accident you understand—take up a safe distance—look very solemn—soon as the affair's over—rush in to remonstrate—surprised to find the parties shaking hands—applaud their ‘courage’ to the skies—all step into your carriages, and drive home to a devilish good breakfast—never trouble your head about knowing less of a pair of bullet forceps than you do of a table-fork—the latter's always the most useful weapon on these occasions. Oh, sir, a good duel *well managed*, always—mind me—*well managed*, is, I say, one of the best *fêtes champêtres* I know. In this, too, I hear there's to be claret and champagne.”

“Ay, ay, doctor; but, on the other hand, the claret may indeed be drawn, yet the pain not shammed at all. I really think, sir, that Dr. Plausible had better attend.”

“No, no, Mr. Wortley, most improper—bad precedent. Dr. Plausible—wife—family—no. As I said before, you alone have no stake in Bath; and really a young man's medical education has not received the last touch until he has seen one or two interesting cases of this sort. Oh, I see, Mr. Wortley, I may depend upon you; so I'll mention your name to the general.”

The general, thought I, who is he? But Bubblerius had departed, and like it or not, I now found that one of these “interesting cases” I must see. When a man is forced into what he knows is wrong, he always makes it a point of self-compensation to feel greatly relieved. This was my case; and so thought I, as there is every probability of my soon seeing a man, or may be two, murdered, *secundum artem*, I had better go and learn how to get through my share in the business.

But then again, where was this “fair field to be fough’ten?” The appearance of Bubblerius announced a speedy solution of this question.

“I have mentioned your name, Mr. Wortley, to the gentlemen,” said he, “and have only to request that you will be punctually upon the ground at six o'clock to-morrow morning.” He then gave me the necessary instructions as to how I should find the field of battle, begged a thousand pardons for running away, and left me to my meditations.

Bubblerius's party was now at its very height. Every thing looked prosperous and happy. The conversazione folks conversed—the meditatives walked—the nimble fry, they danced—and the amorous were flirting to their heart's content.

All were pleased, for there was still something for which to hope—the supper!

“The doctor always gives such good spreads,” said one.

“And such a noble supper room,” quoth another.

“His wine is unexceptionable,” cried a third.

“I think it must be owing to his cellar,” remarked a fourth; “for a finer bouquet than his claret boasts—upon my honour—no, I never did.”—

“See!” added a fifth; “no, nor I; and difficult as Burgundy is to sport—good—beyond the *Côte d'Or*, I scarcely think that you'll find better.”

“Right,” cries a sixth, “right;” and this last fellow you may swear was a brother “doser;” “for,” said he, “the doctor understands the thing completely—spares nothing at his suppers.—So sure, you know, his fees are to be trebled on the morrow.”

What a happy dog I am, thought I; good supper, good wine, good physic—no, I mistake—I take a duel to-morrow morning instead. But when will the supper appear?

“It must be near supper-time now!” I heard some fellow cry *en passant*.

“Will you allow me, Lady Jane, the pleasure of dancing with you the first dance after supper?” demanded some one else of a fair young Venus.

Come, said I, that settles the matter. As the room is large, I suppose we can all sit down at once. Thank my stars! I've no one to care for; the chances are I may even get a good place.

Just at this instant something most villainous assailed my nose. Why what's this? thought I. Can I believe my senses?—I moved away—the change was for the worse—I looked around me. Every one seemed nursing their olfactory with a handkerchief.

“I say! do *you* smell?” said one.

“Yes; don't *you*?” was the reply.

“Oh, *shocking!*” exclaimed a third.

“*Shocking!* *shocking!*” ran round the room: Had nobody fainted? No; several ladies had tried, experienced dames too in the art, but without success.

Such a horrible effluvia, and no one able to faint; that made the matter worse.

Throw open the windows—no effect; throw open the doors—the offence remained. The dancing stopped, conversation was diverted, even the flirting arrested for awhile.

Bubblerius, and the fair Emily, were in despair. What could it be?

The servants were taxed; were they doing nothing below? nothing was doing. Nothing was known beyond the fact, that this odour was first perceived in the hall. Cloaks, bonnets, shawls, were demanded; carriages were ordered.

But the supper! the grand supper, the noble room, the exquisite wines! Who could think of these amid a pestilential atmosphere, that scarcely permitted one to breathe?

In ten minutes, every one had hurried away, full of wonder, doubt, and dismay. In the process of wondering, some one had suggested the possibility of a sewer having given way beneath the house, perhaps from the oscillation of dancing. So far from this yielding consolation, the good people now dreaded lest the whole edifice might come tumbling on them.

A few seconds more, and the great doctor and the fair Emily, Dr. and Mrs. Plausible, and myself, were the only occupants of the large and lately crowded suite of rooms. The first walked up and down disconsolate, and the last three were vainly endeavouring to offer comfort to the second, who from sheer disappointment now felt herself under the necessity of giving way to an hysterical burst of tears, that not even the peril of a falling house could avert.

Seeing I could effect little good in such a group, I took my leave;—glad to get a little fresh air, I strolled on in the clear moonlight. As I advanced, I perceived two people carefully cloaked. They had been watching the house of Bubblerius, and in proportion as I advanced, they retired.

Suddenly there came across me a whiff of the same transcendent fragrance as that which had so lately despoiled a hungry host of their good supper. The circumstances looked suspicious—I thought I knew the men, and determined to bring them to a conference—they took to their heels—I followed—gained upon the chase—suddenly they dropped something in their flight—I stooped to pick it up, and the knaves escaped.

My prize was, however, fully equal to the solving of all doubts;—it was—a pair of bellows!—Around the orifice that admits the air were the remains of some composition that had been subjected to the action of fire; of the ingredients that it might have been compounded, my nose did not permit me to doubt—these had evidently been the gum resin of asafoetida, the sulphuret of potass, powdered charcoal, and saltpetre.

These being kneaded into a paste, the aperture on the inferior part of the bellows was surrounded with it. When dry, it must have burnt in the same way as a pastile—truly a very fragrant—a very refreshing one!—while by using the bellows at the same time, a volume of air thus impregnated could at will be directed whithersoever the inventors pleased.

Coupling these facts with that of the hall of Bubblerius having been first attacked, I guessed on the instant that the rogues had fired at us through the key-hole,—the front door being shut, and neither carriages nor servants at the time outside. As to the players of this prank I had not the least hesitation in my own mind.—They were a couple of “young carvers,” who had hit on this method of avenging their own omission from the party, and of showing to the world how potent were the drugs of the “dosers” when “exhibited” upon themselves.

BOOK THE SIXTH.

CHAPTER VI.

Shows how a second should protect his principal upon the field; and how we hear something farther of old Mother Brown.

THE morning broke, as bright, as beautiful, as if for a meeting of lovers. With a fluttering at my heart, that could not have been greater if I had been a principal party in the matter, I arose, dressed, and repaired to the ground. Both parties had arrived—the combatants were walking apart—the seconds conferring together.

Addressing myself to the latter, I gave them the compliments of the morning, and looked on. Between the two gentlemen thus about to adjust their wrongs, there was a considerable difference of years. One, as Bubblerius had already told me, was a General, though rather young for his rank. The other was far more juvenile, but a man of prepossessing appearance. Mr. Phelim O'Feargus O'Flaherty Toole was the second to the General, and the other second was a colonel Dennison.

"Sir," said the former second, "we will now proceed to toss for the choice of ground, and whoever has the mortification to lose that, shall have the pleasure of giving the word for firing."

"Oh, certainly, as you like, Mr. Toole," replied the colonel.

"Very well, sir—heads I win then, and tails you lose."

"Stay, stay, sir!" said the other, in a hurry; "you forget, that would make me a loser at any rate."

"Oh! by St. Patrick, so it would; I beg ten thousand pardons; it was very lucky you discovered it; I have known such a thing occasion a mighty deal of mischief."

"The d—l you have?" muttered the colonel; but the Irishman, not hearing this, resumed—

"Then this will be the way of it—whether will you choose to win or lose with heads."

"Why, if it is the same to you, I'll win with head, and you will win by tails."

"Agreed, my dear fellow."

Up went the half-crown from the Irishman's hand, and as quickly fell; both stooped to look at it.

"Mortal good luck!" exclaimed the Irishman. "Tails is uppermost? Now, sir, I'll just thank you to place your friend in that nice, straight little rut, or gutter, in a line with the row of trees, beyond there," fronting to about six or eight poplars, that grew up close by, like a file of troops on a parade ground.

"Mr. Toole," exclaimed the colonel, "you surely must be joking, sir."

"Joking, is it, my dear fellow? Faith, you will find it no joke when your friend's disposed of in five minutes' time, as I trust and hope he will be; for what charitable gentleman would wish a good-looking young fellow like your friend to linger unnecessarily in any awkward affair like the present."

The English second fixed his eyes sternly on the Irishman, but before he could make the angry reply he meditated, the general stepped up, and said—

"My dear Toole, I could not possibly take advantage of such ground as you have pointed out. In England we hold such a thing to be deliberate murder."

"Do you?" quoth Phelim O'Feargus O'Flaherty Toole, "you're mighty particular! What barbarians you must be—but have it as you like, general—only, in a small way, I always think it my duty to take the best care of my friend, and settle the matter as quickly as possible."

"Well, well," said the general, "you will arrange all that yet, I dare say; so just choose some other ground, and let us get it over before we're interrupted."

The Irishman, who really was a good-hearted fellow, and thought he had said nothing out of the way, now chose, but with some evident reluctance, a different spot. The affair proceeded—at the first fire, down came the younger combatant.

All rushed up to him, and we found the blood bubbling over his right breast, from what we naturally supposed a wound immediately beneath.

"Doctor," said the General, much agitated, yet evidently using all the strength of a powerful mind to be calm,—"Is

this wound mortal?" To every appearance there was reason to fear it was so. I looked up at him for a moment, said nothing, and resumed the employment of attempting to stanch the hemorrhage."

"I understand you," said the General, "but we must try all that skill can do for him. My carriage shall convey him back to Bath, for I think it will be more easy on its springs than his own."

So accordingly back we all drove; and sad and melancholy enough we were. Even the Irishman's humour only enabled him to exclaim—"O, mortal ill luck! had he only fallen a little more merrily, you might have sworn there was little the matter!"

Is this, thought I, the fête champetre, champagne, and claret breakfast which Bubblerius prophesied for us?

On getting the poor fellow to his rooms and undressing him, the fatal wound did indeed appear to render all hopes of life most doubtful. Avant-couriers had been despatched to Bubblerius, and we found him and Plausible in attendance.

Both were aghast, and consulted as to what should be done. It was now that true talent showed itself. The physician took his friend aside, and said, "My dear Plausible, between ourselves, the only man who can save this patient is Gregory!"

"Do you think so, Doctor?"

"I'm sure of it—think of his long services in the army, with these cases constantly occurring."

"But I hate even his very name—besides he's too much practice already. That is, to do it as I conceive it should be done—as I should do it myself—and I really feel it my duty to the public, to save them from such a state of things. Indeed I do, Dr. Bubblerius."

"As to that, my dear fellow, this is no time to stand discussing such a point; whatever is done, must be without an instant's delay."

"Well, then, my dear sir, I would advise you to be content to regret this young man's fate. As a clever friend remarked to me the day before yesterday, such things must happen sometimes; and, depend upon it, sir, there is ever a good end in the workings of that Hand where life and death are worn but as a signet-ring, to seal our destinies. Besides, sir, this practice of duelling is a pernicious evil, which, for the good of civilization, ought to be put down. We are bound not to pass over a good moral check to it. Properly

speaking, I consider that all duels should be fatal to both parties; if the seconds could be included, so much the more satisfactory. Let us," continued Plausible, warming greatly in his zeal, "contribute our quota. This unfortunate young man, you see, will die; the General, it is to be hoped, will be hung, and the participators have to fly the country!"

"Thank you, sir, the General's my particular friend!"

"Oh, is he?—I beg pardon, I had forgotten that. After all, I heard he's an amiable man and deserving officer."

"You happened to forget that also, I presume, but I must not,—so Mr. Gregory must be summoned."

Accordingly, being luckily found at home, he came.

While Bubblerius and Plausible had been discussing what to do, I had been sponging the wound, clearing away such particles of dress as had entered it and were within my reach, and administering a small dose of laudanum; for though sensibility was to a certain degree restored, the sufferer neither spoke nor noticed any thing. To see the meeting of Gregory, called in by Bubblerius and Plausible, was indeed funny, though it would have been wrong to have indulged feelings such as these at a moment like the present.

Their bow, their looks, their words breathed with that instinctive antipathy which might easily be supposed to reign between the pure surgeon and the chief of the "Dossers."

Having given the necessary explanations as rapidly as possible, they departed, muttering many "a lamentable case!"—and not at all forgetting those expensive nods of the head, which distinguish the very varied and respectable tribe of the empirici.

Not a moment was now lost. The ball, as far as it could be traced, had passed from its point of entrance in the right breast, directly over the parietes of the chest to the left side, wounding the lungs very slightly, and lodging, it was supposed, immediately over the pericardium, a comfortable tenement to yield to a bullet, within half an inch or so, outside one's heart.

This of course contributed very greatly to accelerate the pulse, and brought on besides extreme nervous irritation. The patient was therefore bled on the moment, to an extent I had hardly imagined possible, and even then scarcely a hope could be given of life.

In this state of affairs the General's person was detained, and the usual process was extended to him of refusing bail

while the wounded person was in danger; consequently, for ten days, during which this lasted, the attending surgeon was called upon officially by the civil powers to issue a daily bulletin of his patient's progress.

During this time he had often to make four, and even five visits in the day; and the utmost was done that art could do to save him.

Recourse was had to large bleedings repeatedly. I was left to sit with him in constant attendance, and any complaint of pain was the signal for putting on a dozen additional leeches.

This trouble was at length crowned with the reward it deserved in the recovery of the patient, and certainly was as practical a proof of the good effects of surgical skill as could be desired.

While the town was yet ringing with the success of this case, and Plausible was inventing to me as many of those little drawbacks as his genius could suggest, he was suddenly summoned, late at night, to one who called herself an old patient, and who was now violently ill.

He went, and his consternation reached its height, when he recognised in the complainant, old Mother Brown of darning-needle memory.

She complained of most violent pain, fever, thirst, &c., and as I was the only one in his confidence, I went with him to see her. A needle when once in the human body travels in so extraordinary a manner, that it was scarcely possible to say what mischief it was doing. To make our perplexities the greater, it is but very rarely that they work much evil; oftener finding their way out harmlessly by themselves.

However, we bled her, and treated her by the general symptoms, which could not be wrong; yet still she grew worse, and poor Plausible was in despair. I advised him once more to have recourse to Gregory, which he felt much inclined to do; but said he, "He will laugh at me so terribly, I really cannot stand it." In vain I assured him to the contrary, and that nothing so inclined another to befriend us, as receiving a benefit from him.

No, he could not agree with me in this piece of reasoning, and determined that the chances should be taken by him,—saying nothing of Mother Brown. Suddenly the symptoms changed into peritonitis, and, despite of the most active treatment we could adopt, in twenty-four hours, Mother Brown was gathered to her fathers. The old woman had

never known the fact of the needle's breaking, but she simply asserted it for variety, and upon the venture, as it were.

Egad! she got so near the truth, nothing could be more so. On examining into the cause of death, we found the needle sticking in a fold of that most delicate membrane, the peritoneum. Fortunately for Plausible, I immediately took it out and gave it him. He put it in his pocket, and at once took measures for the committal of his secret, to that which keeps so many and whispers none—the grave.

This was managed; but unfortunately, the old lady was not like Mr. Smith,—she had friends, such as they were, and very particularly tormenting ones they proved. Having never done any thing for her during life, they felt themselves bound, of course, to raise every clamour at her death, and so without hesitation swore roundly as to the cause of her decease, insisted upon having her exhumed, and subjected to a coroner's inquest.

In this extremity, Plausible came to me, prefacing that he had a great favour to ask; I promised it to him at once, without farther consideration.

"It is simply, then," said he, "that you will leave Bath in twenty-four hours, and not be found for this confounded coroner's inquest, and all will go well. The medical men, from appearances, will at once pronounce her to have died of inflammation of the peritoneum. I can say that I never removed any needle from the body. They may not think to ask for my assistant, and the fuss will die away."

Now, notwithstanding all Plausible's faults as a medical man, he had many good qualities in private life; besides, his character tickled and amused me, and I confess, inconsistent as it was, I liked him.

"Poor devil," thought I, "he's got into a scrape, and who, if all their doings were narrowly watched, would not?" I consented. The post-chaise drew up, at the door early next morning; our luggage was soon packed, and Jeremy and I departed.

As we passed the door of Solid, "There," said I, "lives one for whom I shall always feel respect." A little farther on we met a funeral; on inquiring whose it might be, I learned, with unfeigned regret, it was that of the young physician, Dr. Hebbert: thus journeying his last stage to one of the many mansions, which no grief can outrage. As I thought of those his fate left desolate, I gave way to many

bitter feelings—more especially on reflecting that my absence was to protect one of the undeserving possessors of that field of practice, the prevalence of whom, robs merit of its due; and, with one tenth of Plausible's assurance, this man might have lived to the happiness of himself and all who justly loved him.

"How greatly thankful," said I, "should those men be, to whom nature has given that which no art can ever attain,—an iron nerve of frame that will work its way in any station."

"That is, your honour means," quoth Jeremy, "what men usually call impudence."

"True, Jeremy."

"Ay, true enough, sir? and there, I must say, that you and I, your worship, have as you say, great reason to be thankful."

A tear was trembling on my eye-lid, when this folly of Jeremy's brought me back to that happy insensibility termed propriety. Extremes ever meet, and thus it is, in this world, a jest and a funeral jostle each other.

Jeremy, however, seeing me ready to give way, as he thought, too much, took the liberty of lecturing me by saying, "Don't learn, your worship, to be over-sentimental; it sometimes leads to great evils. My young damsel, who went off with me from the dean's, carried it to such an extent, that I found her one bright morning weeping over a wheelbarrow—because it wanted a leg!"

CHAPTER VII.

Which treats of the medical profession, and the consideration required for matrimony.

AFTER driving on some few miles, we came to the house of a gentleman, who had often shown me occasional kindness, and on whom, therefore, I took this opportunity of calling before I left Bath.

He had been a navy surgeon; and few folks knew better the art of getting on in the world than he.

"I'm only an unimportant fellow," he used to say, when

coming in from the sphere of his own practice, to "pick a bone or two occasionally from the jaws of the lions;" which meant to say, that while all the greater bodies were busy with picking at each other's bones, he was accustomed to slip in quietly, and get here a patient and there a patient, until he managed to add to his country cases a very comfortable little town practice.

While I sat at breakfast with him, we discussed such matters as had lately occurred to us, and among other things, touching on his own success.

"The secret of this, sir, is very simple, and as you may find it useful, I mention it. Let Nature always be the physician—do you be content to act only under her orders—watch the moment when to deplete and when to strengthen, and don't attempt to do too much, nor let laziness urge you to do too little; your practice will, under these restrictions, almost always be successful. Never fuss your head about complicating your cases, but act on the broad principle I mention to you, and Nature will soon straighten all the rest."

Thanking my good friend for his hints, so likely to prove useful in a vagabondizing life like mine, I once more got into the chaise, and drove away.

I had now time to reconsider all that I had seen. It was motley enough, truly; but I had been amused, and something useful had been gained. As for the profession, I could not help seeing, that a number of ill-qualified men got into it; for it requires, naturally, fine parts; but, where these are applied to it, nothing could be more noble in its aim and scope, and nothing more to be valued and prized.

On the public lies the blame of patronising a race of pretenders, instead of seeking out and encouraging plain, unpretending practitioners, who have really studied their profession with a wish to excel, and whose power to do good is guarantied by the appearance of ability on the general points of life. Moreover the prejudice against young men, I also observed, to be too great, though natural.

There cannot, it is true, be a better tutor for a surgeon than experience, but very often a young man will pay a share of attention which an old hand cannot from pre-occupation; while, again, if the energy of youth decays in a surgeon, nothing can make up for it.

"Well, well," thought I, "in conclusion, some day I'll go and doctor the Yahoos; in the mean time what mischief

shall we be at next, Jeremy?" uttering the last sentence aloud, and slapping my servant on the shoulder.

" 'Tis impossible to say," replied the honest valet.

" Jeremy," returned I, " the horses' heads are turned towards London, and I want to ask counsel of you. I've tried two professions and I think that must suffice me. I haven't much idea of the law, they tell me 'tis such a dry affair. In short, I think for the present I've rambled sufficiently; in truth, I've long had a strange itch to be or do something respectable."

" Beware of that, sir! I tried it myself—once—and never knew any one who found it answer. It always ends in something exactly the reverse."

" I think of marrying?"

" I'm sorry to hear that, sir. I'm likely to lose my position."

" Oh, no!"

" Then marry, by all means, sir."

" I will. As it is an affair that requires a great deal of consideration, it will be quite consistent that *I* should give it none."

" Quite, sir! Leave the consideration to me, and that you may make as handsome as you can. In the mean time, sir, I'll go to sleep in order to give the matter every advantage."

Accordingly to sleep the rascal went, and in due course of time we arrived in London.

I pass over the lecture my mother gave me, on my going to see her; for most people have a sufficient familiarity with proceedings of that interesting nature. Suffice it to say, that almost the first person I met in her house, was the exact image of her I had lost,—poor Mary.

For the whole of that night her image kept possession of my brain, and as usual when affection touched me, the better principles of my heart prevailed, and once more I really began to have—some very serious reflections.

CHAPTER VIII.

Shows how I married an heiress, but no wife.—In contradistinction to many of my disappointed friends, who marry wives but no heiresses.

AFTER some considerable family jars, which, unfortunately, are not so good as to be worth relating, I was now, through the influence of a worthy friend and tutor, once more reconciled to my father.

He expressed his anxiety that I should take some part in public life, as the employment most suited to my station. In order to qualify me for the intended path, he procured me a situation in the treasury.

Feeling that I might here obtain knowledge, not easily to be acquired elsewhere, I for some months applied myself; having become as much initiated as I was likely to be, the wear of a constant routine jaded me, and I resigned my officialities for the ease and dignity of a private gentleman.

Here, in justice to myself, I must say, that for some time, even according to the strictest notions, I behaved very decently. Hazard became my new object of idolatry, and, with the exception of a few excesses in the gaming line, not the most sober could have found fault with me.

This my good father naturally considered as a great improvement, and the influence of his wealth being very considerable, he had little difficulty in procuring me to be elected member for Huntingdonshire.

Thinking, I suppose, that so much wit and experience ought not selfishly to be confined to his only son, but contribute to enlighten the nation.

Being so admirably placed in my due station in one way, my father took it into his head to complete my business by a marriage. Having himself more money than any reasonable mortal could desire, he wished me, of course, to marry an heiress; being pretty generally supposed worth eight or nine hundred thousand pounds, he very naturally perceived how greatly this would be augmented by my wife's possessing fifty.

Convinced how *unimpeachable* was this argument, I at once gave in to it, and went to wooing the lady. The old father was a city banker, and delighted to have me, while the daughter also would have been delighted to have—nothing to do with me.

I saw this, though she never said it. In fact, her heart was given to another—a barrister of some years' standing. Now, this barrister was a clever fellow, and very duly qualified for the bar—this means to say, he had not a penny to spare. His practice was small, nor could he reasonably expect to enlarge it for some time.

As I like doing a selfish thing in my own way occasionally, the only favour I ever asked for my many silent votes, was a good fat colonial judgeship.

With this I posted off to the barrister's chambers, where I found the dog gnawing a bone in the shape of a five guinea brief.

I told him, I thought I had discovered his secret, and that if he wished to marry the lady, here was an appointment that would enable him to do it; and, farther, if he chose to accept of my services, I would go to the father and gain his consent.

He took me at my word, with much surprise, and many thanks. The old banker was easily gained over, while the daughter, who was a pretty creature, declared only by her tears how much she was obliged to me.

I asked her, why she had not at once thrown herself upon my generosity, and disclosed her secret?

She told me that she would have done so, but for the character I bore of a quiz and a satirist. Despite of all my levity, this answer gave me pain. The tendency to which she alluded was, I knew, in my own case, to be merely the frequent result of too sensitive a disposition, which, crushed in its own disappointed affections, turned inward on itself, and sought forgetfulness of wounded kindness in that quickness of speech, whose bitterness had never reached the heart.

They married and sailed,—the banker having given his daughter such a portion of her fortune as put all the luxuries of affluence within their reach.

Some days after the completion of this affair, my father asked me how I came on with my intended bride.

“Most admirably,” I replied, “I have married her!”

“Why, Wortley, this is very abrupt, and very sudden, indeed, not to say improper—her father cannot be aware of

it—why have you not brought her home, that we might pay her proper respect?"

"For the best of reasons, sir; because I have given her hand to a worthy fellow who has long possessed her heart, and is now bearing her away to the station of a lucrative but distant appointment."

The old gentleman gave utterance to no farther remark, but, as I supposed, made inquiries of the banker concerning the truth of what had happened, for, on the next morning, a note was enclosed to me within a blank envelope, containing a check on his banker for a thousand pounds.

CHAPTER IX.

Shows how soon a man may make a fool of himself, and how long he may be before he confesses it.

THE act of generosity recorded in the last chapter, touched me to the heart! What would I not have given to have realized all a parent's hopes and wishes? Alas! the demoniacal spirit of gambling had so possessed me, that this munificent token of my father's approbation would have fallen but as a mite into the treasury, when applied to my debts. As I could not, of course, draw from my parent any thing like sufficient supplies for the course I had been pursuing, recourse had been had to the Jews.

These wretches already held in their clutches a great reversion of the splendid patrimony to which I was an heir. Not a folly or excess did London's sad stage proffer that I had not rioted in to the utmost,—and now that I really wished to retract, I feared it was impossible. I determined, however, to make one effort—the only one, that could effect the end in view;—in short, to marry. The dissipated life I led had naturally to a great extent confounded—to use a mild term—my feelings as to the sex. Above every thing, it had filled me with a perfect aversion of any union in my own rank of life. I will not at this period say that this was not a mistaken feeling, but it possessed me; and the more entirely, that I had never been able to banish from my mind, the remembrance of the fair young creature whom I have

already mentioned as resembling Mary Plaine so strongly.—Her name was Lucy Egerton—she was perfectly irreproachable in character, very young, very beautiful, and not without some ability; altogether I conceived, that in my own hands, she might be moulded to any thing.

I never had paid a chained and slavish respect to the conventional ideas of society, and though the girl was only the waiting-maid of my mother, yet the similarity of her features were held by me as a sufficient warranty that her mind also would resemble that of my lost Mary.

Wealth I knew would be mine in abundance—rank I was content to leave to minds weak enough to be charmed with it—such rank at least as that of my own birth, sufficed for me.

In short, I determined, without farther delay, to marry, educate my wife with great care, and place her in such a position as she had a right to claim. It was a hazardous step I knew, but having formed my determination I would not go from it, as I thought it was the surest way of tempting myself to relinquish the follies of a vagrant fancy, and become a husband worthy of the woman that I believed Lucy would be rendered by education.

With my characteristic impetuosity the necessary steps were taken, and we were united. On looking back at this affair, I have never been able to account for the sort of fatality with which I was hurried into it—even at the time I had some misgivings that I was going too fast.

However, to show on what slight grounds the unhappiness of life is founded, I shall here only state, that after the marriage we were driving home together, when, just as I was about to imprint a kiss upon the cheek of my young bride, she gently withheld me, and said, "Stay, Edward, there is a soot-drop on your nose!"

This might have been very natural—I am sorry it was so correct, since it gave me the first impression of her coldness of character, which nothing ever after removed.

My mother was furious on learning our marriage, but this was futile—I persisted in my plan, had every recourse to education, but nothing removed an iciness of heart in my wife. This effectually told me that my matrimonial hopes and happiness were at an end. I now knew myself to be more completely wrecked than ever, so I resigned myself to the disappointment as philosophically as I could—settled upon her an adequate annuity, took for her accommodation a house in a retired part of Devon, and we separated for ever.

I hurry over this part of my career, for even at this distance of time, reflection is productive of such shame and self-detestation, that all levity of spirit, either assumed or natural, forsakes me.—Wo is me! How different was the end, to attain which I first set out in life!

Taking what remained of the thousand pounds which my father must have destined to a very different purpose, I at once embarked for the continent, unaccompanied by any one, save Jeremy.

Strange as it may appear, this faithful fellow never ceased to give me the best advice in his own quaint manner; and, still more strange, that it was only from his lips I could brook it. I never gave him any wages, but my purse was as open to him as his-own. I never found him guilty of any extravagance, nor ever felt that he was a weight upon me.

From Calais we journeyed to Paris, leaving behind us the most curious assemblage of the worthless and dishonourable that it would have been possible to have found among the continental English.

On arriving at Paris, ill fortune directed me into the company of a Lord Southwell, who introduced me to a Mr. Taafe, and a man who went by the name of Roberts, but who was in reality a Jew of the name of Payba. With this Roberts we went to dine, played a little, and afterwards adjourned, if I recollect rightly, to the rooms of Lord Southwell.

Here we took to high hazard, at which the Jew lost, in the course of the night, three or four hundred pounds. A day or two having passed without any attempt being made towards the payment of this money, or the renewal of play, some of our party went to the Jew's rooms, found him very insolent, and not at all inclined to deny the rumour that he was about to fly from Paris.

A great deal of imprudent warmth was then displayed by our party, who even went so far as to detain some pledge for the money owing. The Jew on this, sent to the police. Judge of my astonishment, when an officer of the *gen-d'armerie* walked into my room at two o'clock in the morning, and notwithstanding all my assurances of innocence, hurried me off to the Chatelet prison.

I was put into what is called the Secret Chamber; that is, I was hurried from a warm comfortable bed-room and thrown into one of the vilest dungeons in the place. A little straw was the only excuse for a bed, the walls hung

with damp, were scribbled over with the names of various convicts and felons who had been my predecessors in this abode.

I immediately wrote off to the ambassador at Paris, and was at length liberated on giving bail. Several trials and re-trials now followed one another. At first we gained the advantage completely, and the wretched Jew was not only sentenced to make a public recantation, but was severely fined. This again was neutralized.

I published a whole account of the transaction both in England and France; and, disgusted with that mockery of justice which decided one day for this party, and for the other on the next, I left the country.

CHAPTER X.

Which shows how the arts were cultivated by Wortley Montague, together with Jeremy, surnamed "the Honest."

TRAVELLING into the Low Countries, I now determined to pay some attention to an art that had ever possessed more than ordinary charms for me—painting.

Having taking up my abode at Amsterdam, I managed to run against the Scotch gentleman. He had obtained some celebrity for his heads of the Dutch burgomasters, and the faithful copies he made of the interiors of their houses. I had determined, in my own mind, to get into the family of some native Fleming, and there make my observations at full leisure, as well as acquire their language and their mode of painting.

On reconsidering the matter, I thought, however, that the language would be more quickly acquired from one who also knew my own; while a great additional weight was added to this line of reasoning from the fact of the Scotchman possessing a very pretty daughter.

The way in which we became acquainted was somewhat singular. It was evening when we arrived in the Dutch city, and going out from our inn to take a stroll, it so happened that in one of the suburbs through which we passed,

our attention was attracted towards a small house; from this we heard something very like a psalm in our mother tongue. We listened, the psalm concluded, and a female voice, of great softness, began to read. As there was a considerable chink in the shutter of the room where these ceremonies were proceeding, we took leave to examine the interior through the same. A portly individual, whom I conjectured to be of Dutch build, and who certainly had on the Dutch habit, was seated apart, with his hands crossed before him, his still reeking meerschaum laid by upon a chair beside him, and his eyes solemnly bent upon the ground. Near him—I almost took it for his shadow—sat a second self, exactly similar in all his postures and positions, only a little less in size. At a table in the centre of the room was seated the reader—a most entrancing vision—a fair, blue-eyed, light-haired girl, delivering aloud, in English, the evening portion from the Bible.

I could scarcely believe either my eyes or ears. However, having waited till all was over, we then ventured to demand admission. This being granted, we modestly begged pardon for intrusion, urging in excuse, that we were fellow-countrymen whom the sound of our native language in a foreign land had impelled to cultivate, if they would permit it, the pleasure of their acquaintance.

An exclamation in high Dutch was the first sound with which the stout one first greeted us, after which came as kind a welcome as ever was delivered by English language, mingled with a Scottish accent.

If a transitory glance of the fair evening reader had before imparted to me a high feeling of her beauty, that feeling was now doubled; and it was a beauty as rare as it was engaging, a beauty that went at once to the heart, and there, like the nursing of the thunder-cloud, dwelt in its day of flame till all was fired around it!

The supper very quickly made its appearance. It consisted of a dish that might be either Dutch or Scotch, for the matter of that, being a descendant of the bergoo clan. This was flanked by cold beef and ale. No slight modicum of eau de vie, and an immeasurable jar of true Dutch schnaps.

The daughter having seen every thing on table, arranging them with her own hands, requested her father to give his blessing; and while we all sat down, four in number, she waited with her hands crossed behind his chair.

The gallantry of Jeremy and myself, were at this, greatly called in question. We entreated her again and again to

take her place at the board, but in vain. Her father at length came to her relief, by declaring that such was her usual custom. This left us no resource but that of applying very industriously to the good cheer which was before us. Having handsomely achieved our tasks in this respect, the concluding portions of the evening devotions were performed, and the father of the family perceiving that we were comfortably gathered round the fire, gave us to understand our remaining duties, with the most grave countenance.

"Gentlemen," said he, "it's time we should set in to serious drink." Jeremy and I looked at one another rather alarmed, but we prudently said nothing. The daughter, on hearing this preparatory hint, retired, and poor Jeremy then lifting his hands, mumbled to me, "I hope your worship will be good enough to see that I am laid decent, when these savages and their fluids have bereft me of my senses."

But this was going too fast—we were not so badly served—the old gentleman, without any unnecessary loss of time, took a considerable jorum, it is true, and incontinently thereafter gave loose to the flow of words.

His second self proved to be his only son, an artist of no mean eminence. This worthy, in proportion to the quantity of spirit he imbibed, took a longer time to incorporate himself with it. So that by the time his father was quite settled, he had only commenced being fuddled.

Now this family compact had an odd effect. Up to a certain point of the evening the old gentleman was uproarious—calling upon his son to speak—sometimes to sing. At last when his son was mellowing into the speaking point, the old gentleman had reached that pitch that made his dignity insist, not only upon the last word, but upon the whole of them.

Having called for a bowl that might have served the dying Seneca for a bath, they brewed a sufficiency of punch to have inebriated Amsterdam. It was weak, in truth, but up to the last drop of the first bowl, the old gentleman kept describing to me some splendid scenery of swamp and dyke. From this he would every now and then look up at his son, who filled the room with the smoke from his meerschaum, in proportion as he silently emptied the bowl.

"Man," quoth the father, "will ye take your liquor as silent as a sow?" "Eh! feyther?" in turn demanded the son.

"I say, sir, will ye take your drink and no speak? ye're as silent as a sow. D'ye no make ony remark, sir?"

"Eh! feyther?"

"Oh, man! ye're as deaf as a door-stane. D'ye no think, sir, it's gae fine this description I am just giving this gentleman?"

"Eh! feyther! gae fine! braw, braw!" and here came two or three immense whiffs of smoke.

The old gentleman looked at me, and said, as he addressed himself to his own pipe, "There'll be a great change for the better when we get him to the second bowl, I'm thinking?"

Jeremy groaned aloud. The old gentleman thought as much of the groan as he did of Ben Cruach, but went on talking at a rate that left competition far behind. There I sat dead beat, considerably confused by the punch, of which we had nearly exhausted the second bowl, and sincerely wishing myself in bed, though utterly unaware how to effect such a happy issue.

I soon found that my sorrows were only half begun. The son now sprang to life. The double spirit of his father's conversation seemed added to five of his own.

The old gentleman was now heard to exclaim, "The de'il be wi' ye, the Lord forgie me for saying so; will ye no let me have ae word to say, will ye no hear your ain father speak, sir?" speaking at the same time at such a rate he could scarcely hear himself.

The son made a thousand protestations that he was all attention; and the father, to prove it, not content with his own powers of language, must needs take down a heavy volume of Shakspeare, and proceed to read the self-reproaches of Cassius on recovering from his intoxication. I know not whether the son thought with me, that this choice of a subject was rather premature, but he gently opened the door and slipped out. The father, much too far gone to know that he had lost nearly half his auditory, went on through the soliloquy of Hamlet on suicide, passed from thence to the grave of Ophelia, then to the speech of Antony, and started with delight into the thickest of Macbeth, and only awoke from his ecstasy when exclaiming "Hear it not, Duncan, 'tis a knell." Here, very unfortunately, Jeremy, who was napping on his chair, gave a snore so loud, that the great poet himself would have pronounced the sound something that resulted from the baseless fabric of a vision.

The old man looked a thousand rages at the interruption, and just muttering "Oh man, I *must* fling it at thee," sent the book across at poor Jeremy's head, in such a way as

+ *Calio?*

effectually disturbed his slumbers. Of what followed, or in what order, truly I know nothing.

On awakening next morning, I found that, by some unaccountable magic, Jeremy and I had been provided with beds on the night before. Our couches, I grant, were but rude, and only strewed on the floor, yet such as they were, they were not uncomfortable.

Having quitted these for the toilet, and taken a walk, with our extraordinary host, now restored to a most grave and sedate personage, we entered the house, and found a breakfast of truly northern origin. At this the painter's daughter presided, and sweetened our cheer by partaking of it; still there was an air of care upon that soft cheek, unusual and unwelcome to those who loved her.

There is some mystery in this, said I, but I suppose it will be solved in time. Several hints that had dropped from my new acquaintance prepared me to expect that he was an artist, and thinking myself fortunate in having so fallen on my feet, I seized the first fitting opportunity after breakfast, to express my wishes as to residing in the family of one of this pursuit. Our mutual feelings were soon explained, and the agreement decided, by which Jeremy and myself were to be "taken in and done for." This being settled, Mynheer Van Dick, for so he delighted to be called, took Jeremy and myself to his painting-room.

"Sir," said he, as we entered it, "this is the small spot, '*Parva sed aptus mihi*,' in which the happiest part of my life has passed, and, for aught I ken, here will pass such few of my future hours as may be gilded by that transitory hallucination. But sit ye down.

"Before ye, sir, stands a half-finished canvass. It appears but an easy profession, this, of us painters—a piece of cloth, a few brushes, and three colours, may make as fine a painting as Michael Angelo's easel picture. But all the question lies in this—How will ye do it?

"You have but to throw up the window, and your eye takes in ninety degrees at a single view. Before you lies the truest of perspective—Nature herself is authority for colouring; light, shade, and form appear the same as earth has always witnessed them—put but these few things down, and you are the first of your art.

"The same small question only arises, how will you do it? To be brief, then, sir, respect a profession at once so simple and profound; life may be devoted to its studies, but

rarely do we get our reward, till death has glazed the varnish of our paintings!"

The old man sighed as he spoke these words, and with trembling hand, began to scrape the pallet that seemed to have been too hastily put away on the preceding evening. As I was anxious to commence my studies under the old gentleman, the first few days were devoted to the study of perspective, in all its branches and details. Next to this, Mynheer Van Dick lectured me well on light and shadow; and the principles of the chiar oscuro, which no man better understood.

For the first grand point of bringing the greatest light, and darkest shade in *juxta-position*, he referred me to the pictures of Rembrandt, of whom he always told with great glee, the story of his painting a monarch, by putting the king into a dark room, with a tallow candle in his hand, and then taking his likeness through the key-hole.

To these practical illustrations of the theory of his art, he added a plan of his own, which I found most useful. It was his habit to make me every morning parse, as he termed it, a print or drawing, from one of the first masters, compelling me go over it with him most minutely, and give a reason why such objects were in shadow, and others were in light, throughout the various gradations of both.

In addition to this, the old gentleman insisted on my studying four hours in the day, the writings of Leonardo da Vinci; as for the drawings of casts, legs, arms, and other parts of the human frame, there was no end to them.

One morning, however, I was informed by Mynheer, that he should that evening take me to see something, without an attentive study of which no man could hope to be a thorough painter.

"Now then," thought I, "the old gentleman will open to me the whole light of his knowledge on colouring,—some beautiful prismatic spectacle is intended to delight me." All expectation, I hastened off with my tutor to the house of a brother of the brush. We were shown into a room well lighted; a cloth was withdrawn from some long object on a table, and I beheld, with much surprise, and a slight shudder, a human subject, with the whole of the superficial muscles beautifully dissected, and laid open to view.

It was some time before I could overcome my disgust, but, determined not to take my hand from the pencil, I persisted in my visits with the old artist, and by the time that

the state of our subject forbade their continuance, Mynheer announced to me, that my anatomy as an artist might pass current, and "if," he used to add, "you wish to know the value of what you have acquired, consult the works of the great Buonarotti."

This course of study, so different from what might have been expected from the opening supper scene, naturally raised my opinion of the painter. Like the rest of mankind, however, he was not free from his foibles.

Clever as his own works undoubtedly were, the high opinion he entertained of them was grotesque in the extreme.

"Look at that, sir!" he would often exclaim, "Talk of Claude? what is he, more than a good landscape painter? D'ye no ca' that a good landscape? I conceive now," a favourite expression, "that it will stand beside the pastry-cook's works any day in the week."

At another time he would point to a portrait, saying, "There, sir, ca' ye that nothing? Rembrandt might have owned such a head without blushing. Ah, sir, he would conclude, "it's a glorious art, and a lucky chiel art thou' to hae gotten so gude a master."

Mean while these sober doings were enlivened, I cannot say by the smiles, but, certainly, by the beauty, of the daughter. Her grief seemed to lighten, but a clouded tone of mind appeared to be her natural temperament.

This did not at all suit Jeremy; he vowed she reminded him too much of the lady that wept over the wheelbarrow leg.

Infinitely more to his taste was a weekly meeting of five artists, and a poet; they assembled at one another's houses, in rotation, and after a tremendous dinner, and a Dutchman's sitting, such as were able, proceeded to chat, and draw humorous sketches; the which were left behind them as the property of their host, for the time being: while the different anomalies of character thus put into collision, added in no slight degree to the spirit of our meetings.

CHAPTER XI.

What this chapter contains I scarcely know myself; so I am clearly of opinion, that if you take the trouble to read it, you will be much wiser than he who wrote it. But this I beg you will not mention to every body—for fear I should lose my character!

HAVING now been some weeks with this odd mixture of Dutchman and North Briton, my love for his art seemed to cause his bosom to expand towards me. Often, when the evening was fine, he would take me by the arm, and securely reposing on my shoulders the weight of his person, enter into the discussion of such topics as were most dear to him.

By degrees, he gradually approached his own affairs, and it was then with surprise, I learned his own singular history. This, indeed, produced a sympathy between us, until at length, the old gentleman seemed to feel relief by pouring out those hopes and fears that weighed upon his breast.

This sentiment was increased by the fact of his only son possessing a close, reserved, and moody temper—the very opposite to his father's, and the very last to induce confidence in any one.

The subject which seemed to weigh most upon the old man's mind, was concern for his daughter, and from him I now learned the cause of that melancholy in her conduct, which had before seemed to me so inexplicable.

In the humble and contented painter, whose happiness and existence seemed alike to depend upon his palette, I found that I was to venerate a descendant of a long and valiant line of ancestors. The Dutch figure and red nose of my colouring friend, belonged to a Scottish chieftain originally born to high condition and extensive estates.

A Jacobite to the heart's core, youthful blood had urged him to a participation in the rebellion in 1715. Attainder and banishment followed. His son and a beloved wife were the only sharers of his flight. The hardships of the last having brought on a premature labour, the partner of his sorrows was for ever lost to him, in the act of giving birth to a daughter.

The advantages of early travel had cultivated a taste for painting. To this he now had recourse both as a refuge from present distress of mind as well as a means of subsistence. Fortune favoured his industry, and reflection soon taught him the necessity of contentment.

His daughter speedily occupied all his care; a nephew, who had found out their retreat, and whose family were in their original prosperity, had formed an attachment to the fair girl I so much admired.

The connexions of both parties were moving all their interest to obtain a reversion of the confiscation and attainder, in which it was expected they would soon succeed.

Helen, the old man said, had led an anxious and agitating life, while matters so deeply affecting her contemplated union with her cousin, were still in abeyance.

He was now, however, he told me, daily expecting his nephew's arrival from Scotland with the important news of their success. It was the second evening after this conversation, on the change of the moon, that a strong north-west gale—the beginning of the equinox—set in. Poor Helen had, with more than usual anxiety, been watching the weather.

This rude beginning of a season, generally violent, seemed to overcome all her fortitude. It was in vain that we endeavoured to offer her consolation or assuage her fears. With a feeling peculiarly Scottish, some superstitious presentiment had fixed itself upon her mind, and all our endeavours to set her free from its influence were futile. As the only relief which she seemed capable of appreciating, her brother, Jeremy, and myself rode down, by her particular desire, to the small sea port of H***. Here, her lover had written her, that he should arrive.

CHAPTER XII.

Which describes the stranding of the Earl of W **.

On reaching the sea-coast, we found the gale was, indeed, awful. The shore was strewed with wrecks, but no intelligence could be gained of the arrival or loss of the Scotch sloop in which the lover was expected—the Earl of W **.

We had arrived at H—— very late, and after our anxious inquiries, retired, wearied, to rest in a low change house, intended only for the accommodation of Dutch sea-faring men.

At four in the morning, while it was still quite dark, we were roused from our wretched quarters, by intelligence that a vessel, supposed to answer our description, had stranded in the course of the night, on the low sands, a mile and a half to leeward of the harbour.

Hastening on our clothes, we hurried away with guides to the spot indicated. The tempest was raging with the utmost fury it is possible to conceive, and it was with the greatest difficulty we traversed the distance named, being wet to the skin with the showers of spray that were borne upon the gale,

Fearfully did we walk along, our feet scarcely strong enough to support us, amid the wash that occasionally mounted to our knees, and in our trembling hearts already too truly foreboding evil, for which our ingenuity could find no remedy.

The moon's faint light had for some time been struggling with the darkness of the heavens, and now shed a misty and uncertain glare, that only tended to aggravate surrounding horrors. As we advanced the distant shriek of human suffering becoming every moment more distinct, at length announced to us that we were approaching the object of our search.

In a few minutes our guides halted, and we distinctly beheld the form of a fine large cutter, over which the sea was breaking with resistless impetuosity. She lay only a few hundred yards from the shore, and as the light of the moon occasionally brightened amid the scud, we could perceive all that was going on upon her deck.

The topmast and bowsprit were carried away, but the mainmast and its rigging still remained secure. On the lee-side of the latter were crowded a number of human beings; a few also were crouching down on the forecastle, to shelter themselves behind the bitts and bulwarks. From these, as each sea broke over them with terrific fury, we heard a dull cry of agony, as if men, worn out in a vain contention with death, could not yet fall its victim without the involuntary utterance of horror.

For awhile the objects of our fears became obscured from view in the mass of towering foam, and this as suddenly falling back to the sea, streamed off from their unhappy bodies, and exposed them to the piercing blasts of the bitter wintry wind.

As this horrid spectacle was presented to our eyes, it was in vain that we consulted as to any means of saving them; that any boat could have lived in such a surf was impossible. I proposed that we should make a raft, and try and push off to them on that; but courageous as Dutch seamen are, they assured me the project was equally futile.

I then considered the possibility of getting a hawser out to the vessel. This, in the teeth of a gale of wind, was found utterly impracticable. The only hope then that remained, was to hail them and desire them to bend a rope round an empty cask, fling it overboard, and let it drift on shore. By this means, a hawser might have been hauled from them, although one could not be sent to their assistance. We had brought a speaking trumpet with us, and each in turn now hailed the unfortunate vessel, endeavouring to make them comprehend our plan.

Here again the wind was directly against us, and we received no answer to our call, but the short and awful wail that decreased in strength as each successive sea poured over them.

Thus, then, we were compelled to stand silent and helpless spectators. It was suggested among us that the tide would soon begin to fall, and gradually leave the vessel dry. This appeared our only hope, and all that was left for us, was to watch in horror and await the result.

We had been standing on the shore thus planning and debating half an hour, when we observed the door of the after companion hatch open, and one or two gentlemen, seemingly passengers, make their way upon deck.

The moon had been gradually brightening, and we could now observe far more minutely all that took place on board

the wreck. Scarcely had these men emerged from the hatchway, when a terrific sea poured full upon the decks of the devoted vessel, with a dull, heavy, beating sound, that reached us even where we stood.

At first we imagined that the passengers must inevitably have been washed overboard, but as the sea swept across the slant of her deck, we perceived them breasting the surge, and manfully maintaining their hold. The force of the water at one blow demolished and carried off the whole of the glass and railwork which surmounted and protected the cabin; and its defences being swept away, the water rushed down in one vast volume.

A scream, never to be forgotten by those who heard it, was now borne along the tempest. No male voice ever could have given utterance to such a sound, and the whole of us at once exclaimed, "There are women in her!" The words had barely passed our lips, when the inside of the vessel filled, and overflowing with this tremendous flood, a jet of water burst from the cabin sky-light sufficiently strong in volume to bear up a small trunk which floated overboard, and was gradually washed to our feet.

The three or four men who had issued from the companion hastened forward to find protection in the rigging or on the forecastle, while one of the seamen made his way ast and looked down into the cabin sky-light, as if to inquire whether any thing could be done to save those whom we supposed had perished below.

Nothing, however, was to be seen but the dark waters bubbling up and swelling over on the deck, as if in mockery of the many lives they had just swallowed. After gazing in despair for a few moments, the man crept back to the forecastle.

Thus did we watch the spectacle of horror while the tide gradually abated. In the mean time, we examined the trunk which the waves had thrown up at our feet, and our fears were at once realized by finding among the first of the articles, a packet of papers directed for the father of Helen.

Leaving his son to take out the contents and dry them, as far as was practicable by a rude fire we had kindled, I passed the time with Jeremy, sadly contemplating the misery that might be in store for the family with whom we had been residing, and more especially for Helen, if our fears for the safety of her lover should prove true. That he was on board the wreck not a doubt remained on our minds.

The tide now began to fall, and at length left the stranded vessel so dry, that the seamen, who had collected in great numbers, could wade out and offer their assistance.

Piteous was indeed the scene the wreck presented. The sufferers were all so weak as to require assistance to move, and one man was actually frozen into the rigging. No exertion could unbend his limbs from the position in which he had twined them for security, and in addition to this, he was utterly insensible. All that could be done, therefore, was to cut away the rigging above and below him, and convey the unhappy wretch, apparently lifeless, to the shore with the ropes and shrouds intertwined among his limbs, and stiff as his own body with the frost.

The first inquiry we made of the most sensible that reached the beach, was to the fact of the vessel's having possessed a passenger bearing the name of Helen's cousin. An answer was given in the affirmative.

"Where was he? Was he safe?"

A melancholy shake of the head at once confirmed our worst suspicions. I would have asked the particulars of his death, but a degree of faintness came over me, and I read in my informant's looks all that we feared.

Helen's brother, however, put the question.

"Sir," said the stranger, "It is a long and melancholy story, but if you have any interest in the gentleman, and will give me time to regain some power of utterance, I will relate to you all the particulars. The only trunk he possessed was washed to your feet some hours since, and his remains will be found aboard the ill-fated vessel."

Such of the passengers and crew as still lived were now all landed. They were carefully conveyed to the neighbouring port, and every means were used for their restoration and comfort.

At length the stranger felt himself sufficiently recovered to supply by his narration such parts of the history of the wreck as were unknown to us. "An accident at first starting, sir," said he, "may fairly be accounted as the source of all our misfortunes. That ship which we left a few hours since a miserable wreck upon the sands was at our first sailing a fine new vessel. The captain of her is a man universally respected for his talents and abilities. Such was the high opinion entertained of him by the owners, that wishing to serve a young person who had claims upon them, they promoted the latter to be his mate, knowing the inexperience of this youth would be fully counterbalanced by the sufficien-

cy of commander. Unfortunately, however, two days before the sailing of our vessel, the proper captain fell sick, and his duty was ordered to be temporarily fulfilled by the captain of another craft in the employment of the same company.

" This man was exactly the reverse of him he succeeded, he was incompetent and inefficient from age and natural infirmity. He had long served the company, and unwilling to dismiss him they supplied his defects in his own ship by putting under his command an excellent and energetic officer. On moving however to the command of our vessel, he had to depend on a mere youngster. To this all our misfortunes may be attributed.

" Having got on this coast during the gale of wind, and not being fortunate enough to obtain a pilot, our own knowledge proved inadequate. The first thing that happened to us was, that we, drawing thirteen feet of water, went over a sand bank which at the highest tide is never covered with more than twelve. Had the sea which took us over it but dashed us upon the bank not one had been left alive to tell the tale; for it was many miles distant from land.

" We next tried to anchor, but dragged our cable, and finally went on shore on the spot where the hull now lies.

" At this time there seemed to be scarcely twenty yards of water between us and the beach; the wind had gone down considerably, and the surface was comparatively smooth. Every one was impatient to go on shore, but to this the captain objected, saying we were only on a bank—that there was deep water in-shore of us—and that the tide was ebbing, and would soon leave us quite dry.

" Then we might have walked on shore with ease. Unfortunately for us, no one among the passengers happened to be a sea-faring man, or to be possessed of such experience as might warrant a contradiction of the captain's statement.

" Time soon proved, however, what a mistake had been made—the hour of tide had been greatly miscalculated. Owing to the strong gale then blowing, it not only rose much earlier, but with a rapidity that at once secured us for its prey. Confident in the captain's assertion, the whole of the cabin passengers went down to supper;—fourteen of our number were women and children, and six to these were added as male passengers.

" Merrily did we laugh and chat over our meal. One young girl in particular, whose charms were of no ordinary description, became the object of our raillery as to the appearance she would present on the following day bereft of

her gayer dresses; for the ensuing morning was the Sabbath. After a happy evening, in which the congratulations on our anticipated escape were neither few nor lightly uttered, we returned on deck.

"The sounding lead was immediately lowered over the side, and where but a brief space since, there was only three feet of water, the line now indicated seven. With the most dreadful anxiety we turned to the captain, but a species of fatuity seemed to have seized upon him, and he could neither explain that which alarmed us, nor propose any remedy by which to escape the imminent danger.

"The mate was, if possible, still worse, and thus time slipped on, every one proposing something, no one effecting any thing, while our state every moment became more critical. The tide had now well set in, and with it we had to stand all the violence of the heaviest seas the gale could urge against us.

"The unfortunate women, who had so lately been rejoicing at the prospect of safety, screamed and clamoured round the captain for protection, which he had neither skill to devise nor means to afford. As the tide rose outside the vessel, the various leaks which she had made gained so fast upon her, that the water was soon knee deep in the cabin.

"We then demanded of the captain which was the greatest place of safety for those who were so unable to help themselves—the women and children. He at once said that no where would they be so secure from danger as in their berths; accordingly, the mate being present, listed in all such as were not already in their sleeping quarters, and then departed with his superior, as we supposed, to perform the doubly increased duties of the vessel.

"Our condition was soon truly frightful; with every motion of the sea we rolled from side to side, the water alternately rushing in a heavy body as the motion of the ship directed. The waves broke over us with great fury at every sea, and between the intervals of their thus thundering on our deck, we could hear the dreadful roar as they lashed against the land.

"The male passengers were all standing on the cabin stairs; I was the third from the bottom. The gentleman below me was a fine young Scotchman, the same indeed as the one for whom you have been inquiring; we were talking to the ladies, endeavouring to allay their fears, when suddenly the water rose nearly two feet in the cabin, and consequently on the stairs.—'Gentlemen,' said the passenger next above

me, ‘you may remain here if you think fit; I can stand it no longer;’ and requesting some one who stood first to draw back the hatch of the companion which confined the doors, every one above me moved on deck.

At this instant the vessel was thrown on her beam ends. The water in the cabin rushing round, came in contact with the door, shutting it with a violence which defied all attempts to open it. A cry of fear from the unfortunate women thus shut in was at this moment heard; and while the Scotch gentleman, and the one below him, were vainly endeavouring to remedy the mischief by bursting the pannels, a more tremendous wave than any which had yet struck us, now poured its full fury upon the centre of our decks.

“The cabin sky-lights, left unprotected by any tarpaulin or other defence, at once gave way; every atom of their structure, glass, frame and wood-work were dashed into the cabin before the volume of resistless water which followed. At the same time, to consummate our catastrophe, a great portion of the keel was wrenched away, and part of the timbers from the quarter, while the sea getting into the vessel from this aperture, combined with the reaction of that which had swept in the cabin windows, mounted in a solid jet through the defenceless sky-light, until it reached many feet above the deck, bearing on its crest a small trunk that was instantly washed to leeward.

“In less than a second of time from this awful work of devastation, and as the column of water mounted above the deck, there was heard one piercing shriek; but oh! gentlemen, the shrill tone of agony it contained, was like nothing I ever heard before—it rings in my ears still. The same fatal wave that filled the cabin, of course poured down the companion stairs; and few as were the steps I had to mount, I was so completely exhausted on reaching the deck, that the rush of the back-water swept me to the leeward, and but for the bulwarks, would have carried me overboard.

“But what,” said I, interrupting the narrator, “what became of the Scotch gentleman who stood below you?”

“Alas, sir! whether he got entangled with the broken door, or whether the eddy of water was too strong for him, I know not, but he never gained the deck, and all were so put to it to save their own lives, that none of the passengers, at least had it in their power to assist him. The first thing that met our eyes on the subsiding of the water from the deck, was the captain, the mate, and the best part of the crew lashed on the lee fore-rigging. They did not attempt to

come aft, with the exception of one man, the carpenter, who rushing as he best could, to where the water still foamed up through the ruined sky-light, watched if he could see any of the bodies of the female passengers.

"But his efforts were in vain; after that one awful shriek nothing more was heard,—nothing more remained for us, but the sad supposition, that when the waters rushed in they perished as they lay. We tried also to recover the bodies of the unfortunate gentlemen at the bottom of the companion ladder, but here we were equally unsuccessful; and as the sea continued breaking over us, we were only able to find our way to the forecastle, the highest part of the vessel, and there either shelter ourselves under the bulwarks or in the rigging with the rest of the crew.

"In this unfortunate condition we remained; the waves breaking over us every few minutes; the piercing cold of the weather, aggravated by the bitter blast that swept across us, and the evaporation of the wet from our bodies. How in this situation we maintained life until the ebbing of the tide, I know not!

"The horrors of this tremendous night have left an impression, sir, upon me, that fifty lives cannot eradicate.—To think of fourteen unhappy women and children being drowned in their beds without the possibility of an effort to save them; and oh! that shriek, if I could get rid of that, I might be happy!"

CHAPTER XIII.

Which describes a wreck of a different description.

AFTER a short consultation with my companions, it was agreed that nothing remained for us, but that Jeremy should take under his protection the trunk that so lately belonged to the relative of my host; and that as soon as the bodies had been brought from the vessel, and its unfortunate owner recognised, we proposed to return, and seek the best mode of communicating our disastrous intelligence.

Appalling, indeed, was the spectacle presented by the wreck; every thing was in ruins. The wood work entirely

saturated with water, and the bodies of those who had thus miserably perished, covered with a coating of sand.

The two gentlemen were found, as had been expected, lying at the bottom of the companion ladder; their hands were idly but firmly clutched on portions of the stair railing; but from their faces being turned in a different direction, it was supposed they had fallen victims, from having mistaken in the confusion, the right direction of the stair.

On bursting through the panelled door, a still more saddening sight presented itself.—There lay the dead in their berths, just in the state in which they had passed from the repose of life to the slumber of death.—Their clothes still wrapped around them, some of their hands even still hanging from their bed-places. Their countenances composed and calm,—one unhappy mother with her two babes lying beside her.

But for the drops that still fell from the beams, or slowly trickled down, together with the unnatural scene of havoc surrounding them, you might, for a moment, have believed that the inmates of this desolated chamber would yet again awake to the busy world around them.

The dead having been all removed from the vessel, were conveyed to the church of the neighbouring port, and there laid out for the purposes of recognition and interment.

Having performed the last sad duty that for the present devolved on us, we now set off on our return home.

Gently as we endeavoured to communicate our tidings, they came but too suddenly upon the fair girl, the object of whose love was for ever lost to her. She seemed by intuition to draw the sad conclusion from the very beginning of our tale,—she breathed no word of sorrow, but taking herself to her chamber, we considered that the wisest course was to forbear interruption.

The servant, however, who slept next to her was aroused in the night by strange sounds issuing from her room. Bursting open the door they found her raving in a wild delirium, that ere the morning dawned, terminated in fever. Day and night she was watched with the tenderest affection. At length the disease left her—but in the fair palace of her soul insanity had taken up its dwelling.

Thus was one of the brightest beings I ever witnessed, lost to every thing but the pity of mankind. Little availed it, that among the few things saved out of the wreck, came a copy of the pardon and title deeds, which restored to the father his estate; all that made it valuable to him had passed away.

BOOK THE SIXTH.

CHAPTER XIV.

Shows what is a sufficient cause of quarrel in Germany; and how an Irishman can remedy a mistake.

It was some weeks before my mind was enabled entirely to shake off the depression resulting from the scenes of distress I had so recently witnessed. The simple manners of the old man, and the quiet beauty of the daughter, attached me to them with an affection which could not but grieve at the entire blight which their happiness had received.

As a stranger, however, I felt that my presence was but a slight consolation. Taking my adieu, Jeremy and myself set off once more upon our wanderings.

I had determined to pass on to Germany. Proceeding up the Rhine to Cologne, we set off on our route to Leipzig. Being thus near Gottingen, we turned aside to visit that city, where the munificence of George II. founded a university.

Having spent a few days in wandering through its library, and other literary institutions, Jeremy—a thing very unusual with him—got involved in a quarrel with one of the students, who insisted on pushing it to a duel. His opponent was a young man, and, in redundancy of temper, made up for the loss of one eye.

The fellow had the most curious walk I ever beheld, and was altogether one of the most ragged cultivators of learning that could be encountered, even in Gottingen. Jeremy was drawing my attention to his unique appearance, when the stranger happening to observe his countenance, thereupon joined issue. A circle of his brethren of the robe soon formed about us, and insisted on satisfaction.

“Gentlemen,” said I, making a profound bow, “a smile is an injury of such an atrocious description, that no one can differ from you, in believing blood alone can wash away its effects.” The students, one and all, uttered a sound of assent.

"Jeremy," said I, "can you fight much with the small sword?"

"Not much, your worship," said Jeremy; "but I will do my best to pin that cock-eyed gentlemen; and if fortune should go against me, why, we must make up our minds to part a little sooner than we expected. "Hem!" thought I, "I can't afford to lose you just yet." Addressing myself, therefore, once more to the students—"Gentlemen, as the insult has been offered by my servant, his best performances consist rather in playing upon the pistol than the small sword, but if you will direct me to the proper ground, I shall be happy to do what is needful in his behalf." Turning aside into a small court, overlooked by some buildings, devoted doubtless to a very different pursuit, we entered a long chamber, which, whatever was its original purpose, was now empty.

Our swords were drawn and measured in a few seconds, and at the third lunge, mine caught my adversary's upon the hilt, and at the same time passed through the fleshy part of his right arm. Considering this merely as a kind of needle scratch to quicken his attention, I resumed my guard, and was about to proceed to the combat.

The by-standers now rushed in, and declared as the first blood was drawn, the contest was at an end. Slipping my sword into its scabbard, and making a bow to my late adversary and his friends, I turned upon my heel, and left them at their leisure to bind up the wounded.

"Jeremy," said I, "this is far too quarrelsome a place to be pleasant, so come with me, and we will see at once about our departure."

The conveyance by which we were destined to proceed was, in sooth, none of the best; and of this description also were the roads. However, glad were we to avail ourselves of any means of quitting that assemblage of amiable youths with whom a look was a sufficient cause of bloodshed.

In the course of my progress through Germany, I found that this propensity to absurd duels was by no means confined to Gottingen, but was part of the singular character of the German student.

After proceeding some way, and being so far jolted to pieces as to entertain serious doubts of every man getting his own again at the end of the journey, we stopped about eight o'clock, and a passenger, the last that we could carry, was added to our number.

A few oaths and exclamations as my gentleman settled
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himself down in his seat, proved our new acquaintance to be an Irishman. Jeremy and myself were seated opposite to him, and my servant being able to speak French, it was always in this language that we carried on our conversation; for I had no idea that every one should have it in their power to talk of "the two Englishmen."

Soon after entering, the Irishman trod on Jeremy's toe, and on hearing his exclamation of pain begged pardon in a sulky manner that did not prepossess me in his favour. We had not travelled together above an hour when some extraordinary fancy put it into the man's head, to believe that he was in the wrong vehicle, and that instead of getting into that bound for Leipzic, where the fair was then about to be held, he by some mistake imagined that we were bound for Gottingen. After sundry consultations with himself, which revealed to us the subject of his alarm, he addressed himself to the other passengers to ascertain the fact, but being unable to speak any language but his own, became only the more rooted in his delusion.

Conceiving from our looks that we were not friendly to him, he did not attempt to put any questions either to Jeremy or to me; while, on the other hand, we were laughing in our sleeves and enjoying the joke beyond measure,—determined neither to acknowledge our being of the same country, nor to assist him in his dilemma.

In a few minutes we stopped to water the horses and allow their driver to take a slight sip of a more cordial nature. Out got the Irishman, just as we were about to start once more, and bullying the driver most handsomely, tore down his portmanteau, and finally swore that he would neither go on any farther nor pay for the distance he had ridden.

The driver attempted to bring him to reason, and was threatened with being brought to the ground. So finding that this strong language was the only one in common between them, he was obliged to content himself with wishing the Irishman at the bottom of the sea, and then driving on his road.

The Irishman (this I learnt afterwards) no sooner found himself at liberty, than going to the house of the government director of post-horses,—for this happened to be one of the stations,—he dragged the unfortunate German out of bed, and declared he had been most infamously treated, inasmuch as he was obliged to hurry on to Leipzic to make good an appointment at the approaching fair; and that, although he had paid money for this purpose, the rascally people had

popped him into a conveyance, which, so far from bringing him nearer, was, he found out, taking him away from the object of his journey.

After much discussion and an immensity of swearing, he at last contrived to make the Germans understand, that unless they gave him a separate carriage and horses to proceed upon his road, there was no vengeance with which a Briton could visit them that they should not experience.

Ambassadors, consuls, powers of all descriptions were invoked. The Germans got in a fright, and confessed the conveyance he had missed was only a few miles in advance, and that with a little hard driving they would still overtake and put him into it.

They were as good as their word; he started, and after belabouring the poor horses at no comfortable rate, they at length came up with the chase.

With all joy the Irishman called to his driver to stop, jumped out, bid him go to the devil, and proceeded to ensconce himself in the true Leipzig lumber van. Having brought this also to a halt, he opened the door and leaped in.

To his great gratification there were the very companions whom but a short space of time before, he had left under circumstances of so pleasant a description.

The man's astonishment was so great, that it at once divulged his story. So a good laugh was not to be lost, and contriving to find an English tongue, I drew from him the particulars of his adventure, and took the liberty of turning them into German for the diversion of the worthy burghers of Hamburgh.

Many men in the situation of the Irishman would have thought it necessary once more to have lost their temper, but with a good nature that raised him many degrees in our estimation, he joined heartily in the laugh against himself, and for the rest of our journey, proved a most entertaining and amusing companion.

CHAPTER XV.

Which shows how I once more went forward, and yet again went back.

My thoughts now began to return towards England, when taking up a newspaper, containing a list of the members of the new parliament, then about to meet, I perceived, much to my astonishment, I was elected for the borough of Bos-siney. This determined me to start for London. "Come," said I, "though I do not think I can be accused of much taste for variety, suppose I have another trial at becoming what is termed a respectable member of society."

Since leaving Leipzic a long lapse of time had passed away in idleness and vagabondizing of various descriptions. I had paid one or two visits to a few Hungarian nobles, with whom I had some years since contracted an acquaintance in London. I had wandered into Switzerland, and so far made practical inquiry into the condition of a labourer, as even to earn my bread by becoming one myself. Jeremy and myself once went so far as to turn postillions, and drove a rich English booby and an ugly wife from Milan to Turin. I forget how many times we upset them on the road. In the midst of these and many other follies, I was, however, arrested by the knowledge of my being returned for the new parliament.

I had thought that the senate and myself had closed our acquaintance for ever, but when my country called upon me for my services, of course I was too much a patriot to refuse them so slight a favour. For, thought I, if there is no one in the family with more urgent claims than myself to our snug little borough, I'll e'en go home and face my creditors, since I have still a senator's gown to come once more 'twixt them and my nobility.

This prudent resolution being settled, the necessary steps for my journey were taken, and behold me once more in the British metropolis!

It seemed strange, again to stand in the midst of my old haunts, changed in feelings, altered in appearance, many of the friends with whom I had before associated lost to me by death or estranged in affection.

My father received me kindly as ever, but when I spoke

of my intentions of reformation, he only shook his head and asked me my age. Singular old gentleman! He could perceive the faults of others—no one more clearly—but when the criminal was in presence he never had the heart to rebuke him for his errors.

How frequently, when the servants had been guilty of some gross neglect, have I seen him ring the bell, vowing vengeance on the offender. Presently the footman made his appearance—“John, John! Is that you?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Ahem! then, John, may I trouble you to put some coals on the fire?”

So it fared with me. A mutual friend, whom I saw before I waited on the old boy, told me that the governor was resolved on giving me a severe lecture.

The severity of the matter consisted in his asking me to dinner, and on my informing him that I was short of money, he came down with a very handsome cheque upon his banker. As he put this in my hands, he took the liberty of suggesting the propriety of my adhering to the good intentions I had formed; he then alluded to the state of the continent, the probability of the rupture of the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle; he then adverted to my own prospects, the property which he possessed, and the necessity that the man who became the owner of this wealth should take some standing in society.

In short, he said that if I would lay myself out for a parliamentary life, he would exert himself among our connexions to rally round me such a party of support as would get me a fair hearing, and lead to my obtaining that position in the house which he naturally wished for his son.

This was to me a new vein of ambition, or rather an old one more extensively reopened, and for awhile it bled freely. While member for Huntingdon, I had to a degree contented myself with a silent ay or no on any important question, and when these did not happen to be passing through the House, it was rarely troubled by my presence.

That any conduct can be more culpable, or even more contemptible, than such extreme neglect of duty, is true, but the truth only appears when no longer available;—and in most instances man defers thinking of wisdom till it is too late to practise it. To proceed, I now gave myself up to the dream of oratorical ambition—but by far the greatest pleasure it afforded me was received from thinking that my

present pursuits for once gave pleasure to my parent. With all my superlative plans, I could not but feel that I had acted like an egregious fool, and with regard to my father, that I had too often thwarted him in the pursuit of my best interests; while the great virtues of his disposition were no slight reproaches to me, for the past.

For the first two sessions no one could behave better than myself:—constant in my attendance in the house—ever ready to encounter the bore of a committee—moderate in my amusements, to an extent that surprised myself even more than it did Jeremy and my father. The old gentleman at last really began to have some hopes that I should turn out, as he expressed it—“A rational creature!”

But still I ought not to omit mentioning, that my sister having been married to the earl of Bute, my father had thought fit to bestow upon her a much larger share of the family estates than I either admired or deemed requisite. I therefore made up my mind to use the utmost despatch in hating the earl most cordially, and in this you may believe I easily succeeded to my heart’s content.

Though I confess that my plan of self-education was not that in general use among mankind, yet still it was no part of it to lose any of my patrimony. I had a use for it all, large as it was, and the receiving of my expected goods and chattels I noted as an offence never to be forgiven.

With these facts I was not fully acquainted when my oratorical fit first seized me;—on hearing it, my ardour considerably cooled, and at last resolved itself into a species of ague fits;—when I first awoke, nothing could be more palpable than the folly of such an ambition. No sooner, however, was my breakfast finished, than my day dreams of power and place once more resumed their old dominion.

In order to convince the world that I really had more pretensions to the character of a statesman than they—dull rogues!—were aware of, I now published a book—nay, even more than this—I wrote it.

Of course the ill-natured part of mankind—for there is such a part—attributed the work to my old tutor;—while I flattered myself—being a modest, unassuming gentleman—that he could never have written any thing like it.

Even a still more ill-natured thing than this was said by a critic.—I hate those critics who cannot let an author have it all his own way.—This fellow said that Mr. Montague, forsooth, after running through all the grades of low life,

and being even a link-boy, had now generously held up the torch to his enlightened country.

Here, however, the varlet was mistaken,—I had never thought of being a link-boy—I was only a sweep.—But such is the envy that invariably pursues merit.

Now I, who ought to know best, here deliberately assert, on the contrary, that my book was a very learned affair, and classical to boot, it being no less than a history of the Rise and Fall of the Ancient Republics; instituting some sort of comparison, I believe, between them and the British constitution.

If I recollect aright—for I scorned to read it after it was printed—there was something about a militia question in the argument, which very much agitated the minds of the people at the time; but which, as a true philosopher, moved me about as much as whether my cook should put salt into his soup before or after boiling. Now this, I grant, is a very delicate question; but still I never disturbed my sleep;—few things do,—except, indeed, my—conscience. It was this over-nervous sensibility which so peculiarly qualified me for being member of parliament.

At length, after an immense deal of reading up historical, logical, and what not, together with an immeasurable quantity of private spouting, I determined to venture on my first speech. In spite of all the assurances of success from various quarters, the utmost dread took possession of me, and when I considered that I was about to address so many hundred of the first men of my country, I felt convinced that the first cough of disapprobation must silence me for ever.

The night came, and my father, punctual to his word, packed all the friends, connexions, and relations, over whom he had any interest, to hear and applaud me, their brother senator. In order to facilitate my success, I was to second a motion of some importance, brought forward by a member well known on the liberal side of the house.

When it came to my turn to speak, all sense seemed to leave me. Mechanically I stood up, and heard the Speaker pronounce my name. Scarcely knowing whether I stood upon my head or my heels, I began something of which I did not understand three syllables. Time was not given me to utter a sentence, before I heard the friendly cheers from the benches on either side of me.

I went on: the cheers increased, and soon, to my infinite surprise, I actually came to comprehend some part of my

own meaning. From this time all went smoothly,—I gradually launched upon the current of my own feelings, and borne strongly onwards, forgot the listening hundreds, or indeed any thing but Mr. Speaker and myself.

How I got home I never very clearly ascertained, but can remember extremely well the dream-like effect of half a dozen friends, coming to breakfast with me next morning, to inform me that I had made the best maiden speech that the walls of St. Stephen's had, &c., &c., &c., &c.

This, as is usual with my indolent habit, considerably cooled my thirst for farther parliamentary honours.—If they are so easily obtained, thought I, they are not worth having,—why should I plague myself with politics? Are the number of the votaries of that grave insanity not sufficient that I, a scorner of place, an adorer of ease, a worshipper of freedom, should enchain myself in its fetters? *Cui bono?* was the question for ever rising to my lips.

If a gentleman of independent fortune, having really the good of his countrymen at heart, does step forward, what, I demand, is the fate generally awarded to him? He enters Parliament with an honest abhorrence of intrigue and place-hunting.—At the first step, he finds that no man has influence to be scarcely even heard, unless he owns a party.—The possession of property gives him weight. The men who perceive a congeniality in his sentiments seek him out.—He becomes allied to them, and by degrees is one of a party, despite himself.

Too soon he finds his conduct must be fettered by theirs,—their own he now perceives to be guided by motives and principles totally different from his.—Does he pursue his own course?—They smile on and thwart him at the same moment. Does he refuse to join their intrigues?—He is distrusted. Does a great question arise, endangering the places of his friends, or those of their immediate allies, all your differences are on the instant to be forgotten.

Your vote and influence are necessary, and you therefore are become one of the most delightful, amiable creatures upon earth.—If you are a dull speaker, a splendid hearing is promised for your longest effusion. Are you a good speaker? and that you must be, you are pressed to figure in the very van.

At length the battle is won!—You now wish to carry some measure of real practical benefit to the country,—your friends would be most happy—would be delighted to go hand in hand with you—but Mr. So-and-so unfortunately

is pledged against it—can't possibly insult Mr. So-and-so. But supposing all difficulties surmounted, and you at length become a leading member of the cabinet, the views which you have cherished throughout a long life are now realized, and after the endurance of every opposition and immeasurable calumny, your plans are put in action.

But the very spirit of your measures has, in all probability, been crushed out of them—as a natural consequence, they fail. Your labours—your sufferings, all are forgotten—the measure of ingratitude is filled up for you to the brim. The public voice rewards you with the title of Charlatan, and the feeding of your own sheep is, perhaps, proclaimed to be the highest capacity for which your intellect was suited.

As these feelings gained strength in my mind, my attendance in the house became less constant; once more the committees were shirked, and nothing of the member seemed likely to be retained by me, except the franking. This falling-off was not unmarked by my father, and, I believe, occasioned him no slight regret,

As often as he chanced to meet such of my friends as were also in his confidence, he took them aside, and, with the gravity of Nestor, inquired if the reports of my backsliding were really true?

A shake of the head was, in general, the only answer. Then came the wrath of the old gentleman.—

“Ah! I see I must!—yes, I see I must—Nothing less than a severe expostulation will do with him.”

Perchance, the same day, I might be dining with him. Some allusion would be made to my parliamentary prospects—the answer on my part became, of course, evasive.

“Ah, Edward!” the old gentleman would exclaim—and the severe expostulation ended in a sigh. Too soon were my father's fears terminated, and even my own aroused.

CHAPTER XVI.

Shows how our dearest interests are watched by our friends.

“Jeremy,” said I one morning, as he was on the point of removing breakfast, “what packet was that which arrived half an hour since?”

“Committee report from the House, sir,—where shall I put it?”

“On the fire;—and now go down and see whose carriage that is drawing up. If it’s the old gentleman come to talk to me, just say I went out four hours ago to consult—to consult”—

“Who, sir?”

“Oh, any body—my surgeon—no, that will alarm him; say to consult my lawyer—that looks as if I had some prudence.”

“Asking your pardon, sir—that may be a matter of opinion;—I hold it to be just the reverse.” Jeremy made his bow.

It a few seconds, he came running back with a grin of peculiar intelligence.

“A lady, sir, is at the door, and insists on seeing you. I said, your toilette was not finally arranged; but she told me, that was of no consequence.”

Hurrying down to the door, I found a lady nearly connected with myself, who insisted on my taking a seat beside her.

Having given orders to the coachman to drive slowly to the park, she turned to me, and said, “I am come to beg your assistance in a little plot of mine, and I am sure you cannot refuse me.”

This was uttered in that way which admitted of no refusal; the proposal coming, as it did, from a young married woman of acknowledged beauty and wit. Having professed all readiness to obey her commands, I begged she would unfold her plans to me.

“Ah, Wortley, you are a good creature to give in to all my foolish whims, although I do think you are an oddity. But do you happen to know Mr. C——?”

"Certainly," said I, "as a mere acquaintance, and as one of the country members in the House, but nothing more."

"Did you ever see his wife?"

"Never."

"That's singular, for she is perfectly beautiful. Being connected with us by her mother's side, and her husband being a first cousin of mine, I am of course very intimate with them both. They have only been married a few months, and the match was promoted by the friends on both sides, in the hopes of withdrawing him from the turf, where, immense as his fortune is, he bids very fair to dissipate it. He thinks himself vastly skilled in these matters, and is overreached on every side. Unfortunately, the experiment has not quite fulfilled all our expectations. Mrs. C—— complains that her husband begins to neglect her, and though naturally a gentle-minded woman, her spirit in this point runs so high, that she talks to her friends of a separation. Indeed, unless his conduct towards her becomes altered, she will certainly have recourse to this remedy."

"And the wisest plan, is it not?"

"No, it is not. As circumstances stand, it would only prove most detrimental to both. He would be given up entirely to jockeying, and her lot equally wretched, though not culpable."

"Now, to tell you the truth,"—here the fair speaker hesitated for a moment,—"C—— and I were attached. It was the first time I ever knew, by experience, those feelings which have such an influence on our destiny. Our union was prevented by considerations into which I need not enter, but I still feel I should not like to see his happiness destroyed, if it were at all in my power to prevent it."

"But how," said I, "is that possible?"

"Why, I think, by a little innocent stratagem, we might bring him back to his senses, and therefore I have asked your aid. Wild creature as you are, I have known you too long, and I think too well, to doubt that I may trust you. But I see you are anxious to hear the details of my stratagem, and you shall have them.

"Indifferent as C—— may now appear, I know by old experience that he is exceedingly jealous. Even as it is, he does not half admire his wife's celebrity as a woman of beauty and taste; but the large fortune which he still possesses, and indeed the fortune which she brought to him, rendered it a matter of course that she should mix largely in the world, as well abroad as at home.

"His sporting pursuits and companions prevent his seeing a great deal of this, but of what he sees he by no means approves. Now my plan is, to get some friends, on whom I can perfectly depend, to pretend a violent passion for Frances, and by being seen constantly with her in public, as well as at her own house, rouse him to such a degree of jealousy as may be sufficient to"—

"Shoot the intruder?"

"Oh no, my dear Wortley, nothing of that sort, but merely sufficient to bring him to his senses. They neither of them care much for a London life; and perhaps when he sees how matters are apparently going, he may break up his town establishment, and content himself with his fox-hounds and C—— park. Then again, their union may be bound by a tie that it has not yet received; and children, while they diverted her attention into a better channel, might call forth in him emotions not as yet discernible."

"Well," said I, "this is very funny."

"Is that all you have to say to it? I am disappointed in you; I had thought you would have taken it up with more spirit."

"Wait, perhaps I may yet; but you seem equally strange and out of character to my eyes. Why this plan of yours, I hardly know whether to call it most sentimental or romantic. Yet who would have expected this from you, the beauty and the wit. My modern mother, once more restored to youth, apparently taken up more with the brilliant and the frivolous than aught beside!"

"Come, thou wandering Turk, no more badinage. You perhaps have felt, or if not, the day may not be far distant when you will feel, that there is a tender spot in every bosom, and that those who have once called forth our best affections, can never be wholly indifferent to us, or fade away into that utter forgetfulness which awaits mere acquaintance."

"Too well do I even now feel the truth of what you have uttered, my dear friend," replied I, taking her hand in mine; "and problematical as the success of your scheme appears with regard to your friend, and dangerous as I feel it may prove to me, still you may command my sincere efforts, under your more able instruction. What part am I to act?"

"There is only one required; surely you understood me that it was yourself whom I designed for the pretence of admiring my fair cousin. As for the danger—you, who have

gone through so many, can surely never fear the trivial ebullition of C——'s temper."

Alas! that was a danger of which I never thought—to my eyes a danger of a far deeper and more fatal nature lurked in the proposal I had heard. What, thought I, if the simulated love of a beautiful woman should strengthen into a reality? I was about to mention this doubt, but the words died away upon my lips, and promising to play my part to the best of my abilities, I accepted my friend's invitation to repair to her house that night, there to meet Mrs. C——.

"Tell me," said I, as the carriage turned to set me down—"surely Mrs. C—— has no knowledge of this pretty little scheme of yours." For an instant her dark eyes sought mine as if to read the inmost secret of my heart. Whether she was satisfied, I know not, but the smile which for a moment had been banished, now resumed its place around lips that were made to win whatever cause they pleaded.

"You are right," said she; "Frances has no knowledge of my little plot, though I am persuaded that it can be productive of no harm and may bring about much good." As she said this she put me down once more at my lodgings, reminding me not to forget the hour of appointment.

Here is a pretty vista opened for a self-reforming gentleman, thought I, as I flung myself upon a sofa.

A thousand thoughts crowded upon me, and seemed to urge a retractation from the perilous office I had taken upon me, but with this sense of peril arose also that wayward desire to encounter it, which has got me into more scrapes than all the other intractabilities of my disposition put together.

After a long consideration of the subject, I determined to accede to this conspiracy in love. This, as it was the most foolish thing I could do, I might have expected from the first. "Come," said I, springing up to dress—"at least it will break the monotony of this vile membership, and so while I pay my pretended devoirs to Mrs. C——, the devil may look after my constituents—more especially as they've thought fit to pop me in for a borough instead of retaining me for Huntingdon."

I used to feel there did attach to me some respectability; for on this point I was always very particular;—as I strutted down to St. Stephen's a county member—but now a mere common-place borough body! Egad! it's a very fair cause of quarrel with them. The more severely aggravated, that I never thought of it before.

CHAPTER XVII.

Shows how I, the self-reforming Wortley Montague, proceeded to recover for a lady the lost affections of a husband.

PUNCTUAL to a moment, I drove to my friend's house. On arriving at the door of the saloon, I heard some one singing with a pathos and feeling that went thrilling to the inmost chords of my heart. Entering so gently that no one either heard or noticed me, I found, as I had been led to expect, only a few friends, the whole of whose attention was absorbed by a fair young creature at the farther end of the room.

She was bending lightly over her harp, and sang a wild Irish air that breathed the very spirit of that enchanting liberty so dear to the sons of Old Erin.

Forgotten was the object for which I came,—the remembrance even of the house in which I stood had passed away—the being whom I now saw before me, surpassing even the creations of my own fancy, filled every thought and feeling.

The song ended, but the spell was not dissolved. As she rose from her seat, I saw that her colour was heightened, and that her limbs trembled—her hostess came forward to cover her retreat—and, after a few exclamations of admiration, the buzz of general conversation succeeded to the late quiet,

Thank heaven, said I to myself, that I have run against that fair girl, her memory will be a shield and buckler for me, and I may now safely enter on my pretended flirtation. Going up to my friend without farther delay, I announced myself.

“How punctual, Wortley! and for you?—Come, I don't despair of your reformation yet. Allow me to present you to my relative, Mrs. C——.”

Following the direction of her eyes as she said this, I thought I should have sank on the ground as they rested on the light figure of the enchanting Songstress.

For some moments I stood transfixed, unable to say any thing, and only thinking that I never had appeared less at

ease in my life. I felt that all was over with me—that some sad turn of Fate awaited me, and that I had no energy left to avoid, or even attempt its avoidance.

Nothing is more epidemic than this *distract* manner, and from me it quickly communicated itself to Mrs. C——. This was some slight relief, but still from the knowledge of the purpose for which we had met, there was naturally a constraint between us which might not have existed under other circumstances.

As the evening drew on, this gradually diminished; and by the time her carriage had arrived, we seemed to be on a tolerable understanding. At this time my friend came up and said,

“Wortley, I hope you’ve no engagement for to-morrow.” I paused to remember. “Come, come! even if you have, you must give it up, for I have invitation to bring you with me to-morrow to a nice little dinner party, at Mrs. C——’s, where you will have an opportunity of making the acquaintance of Monsieur; be sure, therefore, to get up all your knowledge of dogs and horses, and wo betide you if not here at six. Good night, Frances!”—and off went the thoughtless being, little knowing what kind of net her fingers were weaving around her friends, and busily engaged for the moment in playing the hospitable to some of her other guests.

That night I slept but little.—The charming figure, the intelligent face of Mrs. C—— were constantly before me. What an insensate lump of clay must her husband be, thought I, to neglect such a creature.—But where will this blind scheme end?—Can it terminate in any good?—If it has the effect expected by her cousin—what will be in store for me, after weeks perhaps of the greatest intimacy,—I, who so acutely feel the witchery of her beauty and gentleness even already?

On the other hand, if the husband grows obstinate as well as angry, into what a boundless sea of troubles shall we not both be plunged.—Twice I started from my bed with the intention of summoning Jeremy to pack up every thing, order the carriage, and bid adieu for some months at least to London.—My hand was on the bell—why did I falter—would I had possessed sufficient courage to execute my plans, but alas, once again, that face, those eyes, rose up before me.

“Let me but see them once again,—only once more, and then—”

“Then you will be weak as ever!” my conscience whis-

pered; but pouring out a tumbler full of wine, I sank once more upon my couch, to dream of Frances, and to nurse feelings that my bosom had not known for years.

With the earliest moment of awakening, came the only prudent hour I think I ever know during the twenty-four.

"I must fly—I must fly," I repeated, half aloud.

"Oh! don't make yourself uneasy, sir," replied Jeremy, thrusting his nose between the curtains—"You forget that you're still a member. Your creditors can't take your body, whatever they——"

"Member! the devil fly away with the membership and the creditors both, and you at their tail; you, Sir Jeremy, the honest, what man of experience ever talks of his creditors?—Talking about it, you blockhead, is their business, not mine—go away and bring me a cup of coffee."

Another slumber succeeded, the sensible interval passed away, and I arose a lost man.—The hour of six arrived, and soon afterwards I found myself seated at the right hand of Mrs. C——.

Next to herself her husband was of course the object of my greatest curiosity. He might be termed a fine man, but coarse in his manner, and wearing a look of ordinary common-place, not quite amounting to vulgarity, but from which it is difficult for men wholly to escape who mix much in the worshipful society of jockeys and grooms.

His conduct to me, however, was gracious in the extreme, and the cloth being removed, I matched his hard fox-runs with the more stirring details of the German boar hunts, and having done my best to display all my knowledge relating to his four-footed favourites, as soon as an opportunity afforded, I withdrew.

To make up for the usual stupidity of dinner, the rest of the evening seemed to fly. My acquaintance with Mrs. C—— came on as if by intuition, and ere I rose to go, her cousin made an appointment for the following evening, by which we were to dine with her;—then repair to see Garrick, and afterwards sup together.

Thus day after day glided past—every hour revealing to me how dangerous was the enjoyment of the society of Frances, yet every moment proving how dear, how necessary to my happiness it had become.

Often have I sat looking at her in mute irresistible anguish, and asking myself what farther of self-respect or honour I could ever feel again in life, if I allowed a creature so young, so amiable, so fair, to meet the ruin that impended

over her, or if by any want of self-denial I did not sacrifice myself to save her.

Again, at these moments, that fatal beauty came before me lovelier than ever, and the natural sophistry of the heart painted in two convincing colours, the possibility of my remaining near her, without allowing our passions to betray us into any thing that was wrong.

Ah, treacherous guide!—Let him who would be truly happy—who would avoid the worst of evils, a remorseful memory—let him beware of listening to a sophistry that pleads in favour of his prejudices or his passions;—so many and so various a host are these, Truth has no voice sufficiently loud to be heard among them.

Again and again in the course of our intimacy did I give the orders for quitting London—once I got as far as Blackheath, and then unable to contend with the grief that strove within me, I returned—yet knowing—fully knowing, as I did, that my only safety was to be found in instant flight.

Another day—only another day,—let me see her but for this time—let me tell her that I am going—let me hear those tones again, and to-morrow I really will be gone.—The morrow came—the trunks were unpacked, the carriage quietly reposing at the livery stables, and Jeremy laughing at his master.

These emotions, so powerfully developed in my own mind, seemed as yet to slumber in the bosom of Frances,—she had loved her husband deeply—devotedly—and notwithstanding all his neglect, it was long ere this affection knew either change or decay.

Our friendship, however, was very far from not being shared by her, but so recently taken from her father's home, she was little versed in the knowledge of the human heart, or the observation of aught that lay beneath the surface.

It was true that the reserve first evident in her manner had given way to a confidence as open and frank. She intrusted to my ear all her little sorrows, nor ever seemed for a moment to think that the slightest peril could accrue to her from such a proceeding.

In proportion as we grew better acquainted, her cousin had no longer any necessity to give me those invitations, which never at first would have come from herself. Very soon it became a question, whether out of the twenty-four hours most were passed at my house or hers. Seen together as we were thus constantly in public, that good-natured set of people were not slow in making their own comments—of

course as leniently as possible, the more so, that most of my friends were of opinion, that I was, as the phrase goes, "somewhat eccentric."

I never heard that any one took any great pains to keep these matters from the husband; and in proportion as my friendship increased with Frances, it waned with the jockey. In the mean while, I had many visits from the cousin, who seemed to be highly delighted with what she termed the success of her plot.

Surely, thought I, she can never be making a mere tool and dupe of me for purposes of her own. Surely *she* can have no views on this better kind of brute. But when these suspicions crossed my mind, a look at her own frank countenance at once dispelled them.

Such treachery was of two hellish a description ever to enter into a mind not thoroughly abandoned, or to be entertained by one who was affluently and comfortably, if not happily, married.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Which shows how admirably our love conspiracy succeeded.

WHILE affairs were thus proceeding, I used not unfrequently to debate with Lady —, the eligibility of the course she had chosen; but, high-spirited and sanguine, some witty answer was but too often the only reply I received to what she termed my sermons.

At length she came to call on me very early one morning, and in high glee announced that a successful issue to her manœuvres had at length arrived. She had met C— on the preceding evening at some party, and he had taken her aside to complain, with great indignation, of the conduct of his wife, in flirting with a man of Mr. Wortley Montague's character.

"Character!" said I, "did the rascal attempt to take away my character?"

"No, Edward," replied she, tapping me with her fan, "I wish he had. You must have been the gainer by that, whoever got it." She then went on to say, that she had taken

the opportunity of telling C——, that his wife's conduct was nothing more than what he might expect—deserting her as he did.

My gentleman, however, did not appear to relish this advice, and went away very sulky, protesting that the perception of such conduct was the last thing to bring back his affection.

Telling my fair visitant that I was rather of the same opinion, and that, in short, I could not in this instance perceive that presage of success she had led me to expect, I stated at once my regret that she had not spoken more persuasively to the husband; and added my conviction, that the experiment had now far better be brought to a conclusion.

This she would by no means allow, and with a strange mixture of inclination and reluctance, I at last consented to the prosecution of my attendance, inwardly cursing myself as a fool for the risk I ran of involving a woman I loved, and yet delighted at the extension of the time, during which I was still to be permitted the joy of her society.

It had lately been usual for us to take a drive together at noon in Hyde Park. An appointment had been made for the day on which this conversation took place, but having been kept beyond my time, I was told, on calling, that Mrs. C—— had already driven out.

Concluding that she had gone to our accustomed drive, I walked that way, and soon discovered the carriage. As it was driving slowly, I speedily overtook it.

The door was opened, and as Mrs. C—— endeavoured to see who was coming, I presented myself. On seeing me, the slight colour on her cheek faded away, and the hand that was warmly pressed in mine became of a chilly coldness, while her blue eyes, filling with tears, rendered her faint silence more eloquent than language ever yet became.

“What has happened, Frances,” said I:—for a moment she looked at me, but spoke not—then, as the tell-tale drops slowly coursed their way, she said,

“We must never meet again! Would that we had never met!”

Would, indeed, for your sake, thought I.

“I am sure,” she resumed,—“I am sure I saw no harm in cultivating the acquaintance of a distant connexion of a part of my own family, lonely and forsaken as I was, or never would I have done so.”

She paused for a moment, for with the remembrance of

her sorrows, the grief that oppressed her increased tenfold. "But it is of little avail to lament, my dear friend—for such you have ever proved yourself to me. There is only one path of duty left for my pursuit. My husband, who has remained at variance with me for the last week, came abruptly into my sitting-room this morning. After a scene which I shall never remember but with the greatest horror, he told me that I must at once decide whether to discontinue my friendship with you or my union with him. You cannot, Edward, doubt that, ill-treated as I have been, I, of course, obey my husband's commands. This note," drawing my attention to one in her hand, "contains my resolution. I left my house early this morning, on purpose that you might not run the risk of encountering him, and judging that you might be coming here to ride, I brought it with me."

She gave the note to me as she spoke, and I gladly seized and pressed it to my lips as the last token of her friendship that I might ever receive. I tried to speak, but my thoughts, confused and agonized, refused to find relief in utterance.

She saw all that was struggling in my heart, and her head, sinking upon my shoulder, she whispered,—"Oh, Wortley! I did not think you could have felt thus for me! —For me, the lonely—the deserted—the unhappy!"

Alas! those words!—They seemed to glide to my heart like some subtle and searching fire. Awaking me at once to a sense of how deeply I loved—and whispering how tender in return was the interest that love excited for me in the breast of her who now, for the first time, discovered that she was the idolized object of my own fatal attachment.

Scarcely knowing, in the anguish of the moment, what I did, my arm drew her towards me, and my grief involuntarily mingled itself with hers. At this moment a horseman dashed up alongside the carriage, a hand was laid on the open window-sill. At the same time the rider stooping, looked in upon us, and then started back as if doubting what he saw,—it was no other than C—— himself.

Frances was sitting on his side, but her head resting on my shoulder she had neither seen nor heard him. The latter, however, she was soon destined to do.

In a voice, furious with rage, and eyes that seemed starting from his head, he grasped her arm, and exclaimed,—"Madam, is this you?" Taking his wrist in a gripe that

nearly made the blood start from the finger-nails, I thrust it back through the window. For a moment he tottered on his saddle; then, once more regaining his position, he looked sternly at me, saying, "This, sir, shall not be forgotten in the settling of our accounts."

"As soon as you please," I replied, and was about to add more, when Frances, springing up between us, her husband demanded, with bitter irony, whither she was driving.

"Hear me, Henry, calmly, I beseech you!" said she, "I came but to bid adieu to Mr. Montague—to break off the friendship which has given you so much offence, and then return home."

"*Home!* madam," replied he, putting his head within the carriage, so that the servants could not hear him, "it is in vain you seek my door, it is for ever closed against you! As for you, sir," turning to me, "we shall meet again."

"I sincerely hope so," I rejoined; when, dashing his spurs into his horse's flanks, he left us as though the furies were pursuing him. As for Frances she sank beside me alike senseless and immovable.

Beautiful, but hapless being! thought I, well will it be for thee if death has arrived to close thy sorrows. Taking her gently in my arms, I watched her pallid countenance, and shedding a torrent of tears, began, too late, to accuse myself with the deepest remorse of the ruin I had occasioned.

Slowly, and to all appearance with much pain, she revived. While the fit lasted, I had in vain endeavoured to decide what would be the most proper course to be taken. The conclusion to which I came was, that every thing depended on her own inclination, and in order that these might be strictly followed, I was prepared for every extremity.

It is for me she is thus plunged into this vortex, and when I desert her may I perish by the vilest end. The first question on her recovering was, where she would wish to go. At this question all her griefs were doubled; she could only clasp her hands like one utterly forlorn, and give herself up to a fresh access of wo.

At first I offered to drive to her cousin's, then to her father's, and afterwards to the houses of one or two other relations who were then in town, but a sense of horror at presenting herself before them, an outcast from her husband, overcame every other consideration. She could only, there-

fore, wring her hands and utter the wildest supplications to heaven for instant death.

After considering a moment the exigence of the case, I came to a decision which no man can call prudent, but which few in my situation would not have taken. Directing the carriage to be driven to my lodgings, I there found Jeremy.

Giving him his instructions, I next resumed my seat beside Frances, having previously told the coachman to drive to Greenwich. On our arrival I sent the servant back with the horses to London, and ordering four post-horses in their place, set off for Dover.

An apathy bordering on madness had taken possession of Frances, and to nothing that occurred could I draw forth any thing that resembled a coherent reply. It was not yet noon when we drove from the park, and by dint of urging the postillions, we managed to arrive at Dover soon after four o'clock in the morning. Here, having seen that Frances was duly tended by the hostess of the hotel, I hastened to take what slight repose yet remained for me.

CHAPTER XIX.

Which shows what preparations the husband made, towards showing me his gratitude for the able manner in which I conducted the process of restoring his wife to his affections.

I know not whether it is in contempt of such a weak creature as man, or from any other equally probable cause, but certainly fortune, even in the midst of our deepest distresses, generally takes leave to throw in something of a ridiculous and absurd character.

Tired and harassed as I was, my rest was far from unbroken, and the consciousness that I had not the good fortune to be sleeping alone, was soon forced upon me by the irritating dispositions of my companions. "Ah!" thought I, "would to heaven, my Agile Tormentors, I could skip like you,—how soon would I hop out of my present dilemma."

As the good luck of having such an apartment had been owing to the night waiter, I no sooner caught a sight of the rascal, than I demanded how he dared play me such a trick.

“Why, your honour,” replied the fellow, scratching his head, “I was afraid that them creatures might disturb you a little, but seeing we had a gentleman here the whole of last summer, Mr. Edwards, who was never no ways put out by them, I thought, as your name was Edward too, sir, that you and them might ‘gree equally well.”

Dismissing this acute reasoner, I went up to Franees’ door to inquire whether she could come down. From the description of the landlady, however, I forbore to put the question, and walking out to shake off, if possible, the extreme melancholy of my thoughts, I left the unhappy invalid to sleep on till noon.

Sleep, thou blessing beyond all on earth, when every care is stayed, and even the unquiet mind of man is withheld from preying on itself—tranquil type of death!—could we only lead the lives we should, how bearable would be existence and how sweet the grave!

Those who have followed me through all the windings of a mad career, must often have been tempted to look with contempt and disgust on a being of such weakness; but it is not from a want of heart that I have erred, but from a wretched absence of that firm principle which can alone make any of our good qualities available.

Never did I feel this more bitterly than on this very morning, but what could I do? I had taken that first fatal step which is every thing, while the rest are mere sequents of course.

On returning to the hotel I found Jeremy. The rogue had finished breakfast, and was now taking a nap in the corner of his box, from which a fine-toned snore resounded through the coffee-room.

Rousing him once more to a sense of this world, I sent him out to find some vessel, great or small, to sail with us to Calais—the regular sailing packet not crossing as soon as I could wish.

If to-morrow finds me here, thought I, we shall have the foxhunter down, and the scene with him had better take place over the water.

A small-decked vessel was soon discovered, and, tempted by an extra fee, the skipper agreed to take us over that afternoon. By two o’clock every thing was ready, and

taking Frances in my arms, seemingly insensible and indifferent to all around her, I carried her on board, having previously engaged a female attendant for the voyage, and made every thing as comfortable for her reception as possible.

The wind was fair and the sea not very high. Having watched the white cliffs of Kent fade fairly beneath the blue horizon, I retired below to seek some object of interest less dejecting. The skipper, who was a rough kind-hearted body, had accompanied me, perhaps to proffer, but more certainly to take, a little matter which he styled "a good stiff glass of grog."

Having only two men and a boy on board besides himself, the boy of course attended on his wants in the cabin, and assisted on emergencies in the other duties of the vessel.

Unfortunately the lad had a habit of stammering, which, when he got a fright, amounted almost to loss of speech. Strange to say, in these exigencies, by taking to singing, which he did very well, he at once became enabled to express all that he could wish to say.

This curious specimen of the cantatory art had nearly cost me dear, for the lad having been sent on deck with a message to the man at the helm, we suddenly heard some confusion above, and down rushed the boy with every emotion of terror in his countenance, while his mouth shut and opened in silence as he endeavoured in vain to communicate the cause of alarm.

"Sing, you rascal, sing!" said the captain, making a motion as if to fling a jug at his head. At once starting off into a true Tyburn sing-song, the boy went on—

"Jeremiah's fell overboard bucket and all!"

I knew not what the fellow meant, but seeing the captain rush upon deck I followed him.

For once there was truth in a song. Jeremiah had been asked to fill a bucket with salt water to help to wash the deck, and anxious to be useful, without being very expert, he lost his hold, and taking a bath of rather an unpleasant nature, was now some few yards astern. The vessel being hove-to, we soon managed to pick up my gentleman, and consign him to a warm bed, and by the time of our arrival at Calais, he was fully able to rise and resume his duties.

That evening was the first on which Frances showed any signs of rousing from the deep despondency in which she had hitherto been plunged. But it was only a change of sorrow that she experienced—that of waking from the tor-

por of wo to its acute reality. I did not attempt to comfort her, for what comfort could I offer?

Too well, too dearly did I love her, to utter any thing that might convey the harrowing truth of the position in which she stood in the world's eye, and though guilty of nothing more criminal than that of having allowed our affections to wander towards each other, still every moment that my eye rested on her beauty, I thought only of the anguish I had caused her.

I did not curse, as I well might, the folly of my relative, Lady —, though at first some suspicion of her sincerity did again cross me—no, it was myself. It was my own mental blindness, or rather weakness, that I accused, and oh! how truly!—for ever permitting myself to be embarked in such a mad career.

Conversing on topics as distant from our own thoughts as possible, I endeavoured to lead her mind from dwelling on that which distressed it, and had the satisfaction of seeing her retire to her room with less of that alarming depression of spirits than I had before witnessed.

On the following morning, as is usual with me when suffering under any annoyance, I slept till late, and was just in the act of taking breakfast in my own room, when one of the waiters brought me up a card of the Honourable Colonel Rugby.

Ah, thought I immediately, so he comes at last.—“Jeremy, take down my compliments, and tell the Colonel if he will do me the favour to wait till I am dressed, I shall be happy to see him, or, if he will excuse my room and take a cup of chocolate with me, it will give me so much the more pleasure.”—In a few minutes the colonel made his appearance.

He was a fine handsome-looking fellow, and though, by his looks, he could not yet have passed thirty, still his countenance bespoke him already to have reached that necessary, but not very common attainment, when a young man shakes off the puppy and becomes a rational creature. For this I am convinced, is as distinct an epoch in our lives, as the yearly casting of the skin in that of a snake.

“Colonel Rugby, I am happy to see you—I conclude you call on me from Mr. C—?”

“I do,” said the colonel, seating himself; “and sorry though I am that circumstances have rendered my services necessary to my friend, still I may hope—”

“Do you take milk and sugar, colonel?” said I, sparing

him the rest of the usual common-places; launching at once into the topics of the day, we waited till the waiter removed the breakfast things, and then entered on the business of the moment. The colonel, I found, as I had expected, was simply charged with an inquiry as to the place, time, and weapons that would suit me for rendering that satisfaction—and so on.

To this I replied—that as Mr. C—— appeared to be the injured party, his choice in all these matters would be mine.

“Now, Colonel Rugby,” I concluded, “having premised that I am perfectly ready to meet your friend on any terms, I must, in bare justice to Mrs. C—— and to myself, state to you, without enlargement or suppression, the whole of the facts connected with this case.” Accordingly I related to him the exact truth.

“Now,” said I, “you will communicate these facts to Mr. C——. He may pretend to discredit, or it is possible he may have the good sense to believe them. Let him, however, act as he will—I pledge my honour to the veracity of every word I have related to you; and if he determines on a meeting I am at home waiting your instructions.”

With some flattering expressions of civility, the colonel took his leave, and in two hours I received a note from him stating the resolution of Mr. C—— to meet me that night at eight o’clock, on the sands to the westward of Calais Harbour.

The length of my gentleman’s sword was enclosed for my consideration, together with a notification that the colonel would bring his own pistols, so that I need not trouble myself on that score.

“A most formidable affair this is to be, your worship,” said Jeremy, as he read the note aloud to me.—“It reminds me of one through which I once had the honour of passing with a half-pay midshipman.”

“Ay, indeed?—Come, then, let us have the whole history of it.—Lucky am I to get such consolation on my sea of troubles.—I suppose, Master Jeremy, this is one among the many of your ‘suppressed’ episodes?”

“Why, your worship, we’ll say nothing about those, but touching the duel of which I spoke, that fell out thus:—Having met in mixed society,—your worship understands the phrase—with a gentleman who called himself a half-pay midshipman, he began to narrate his adventures to a select

party of strangers, while we were all sitting over our cups at one of those liberal houses where a man is obliged to nothing but his purse. Being one of the party by accident, and also by accident somewhat fuddled, I listened with great pleasure to the worthy officer's narrative, which, if it boasted of no other adornment, had such a felicitous smack of the marvellous as warranted a most excellent vein of fancy in the detailer.

“ Among other happy subjects on which he touched, was that of his great skill in diplomacy—and this, as it seems to unravel the heart of that great skein, of petty winding, I would recommend to the attention of your worship in particular, and all high plenipotentiaries and ambassadors in general.

“ It seems the midshipman had at one period of his service been doing duty on board a small man-of-war cutter. The commander of this vessel having got involved in a quarrel with the British Consul of some little port in which he was lying, sent the said midshipman on shore to arrange the dispute; the commander, who was a lieutenant, choosing to think it beneath his dignity to negotiate, save through an inferior.

“ This point being settled, he very wisely took his envoy aside before starting, and after a long lecture on the grandeur of his new profession, he concluded his discourse by saying that every thing depended on his getting the weather-gauge of the consul; and that, finally, above all things, somehow or other, the envoy was ‘ to do him’ if he could.

“ The midshipman departed, and soon returned.

“ ‘ Well,’ said the lieutenant, ‘ how have you managed the rascal?’

“ ‘ O, sir,’ replied the midshipman, ‘ of course—I’ve *done* him!—as you desired.’

“ ‘ Ah! ’ returned the lieutenant, overjoyed, ‘ how did you manage that?’

“ ‘ Why, I couldn’t come over him in any other way, and so, sir, I—stole his watch!’

“ Well, your worship, at this specimen of the half-pay midshipman’s powers in diplomacy we all fell a laughing, of course—I most heartily among the rest.

“ ‘ What do you mean, sir, by laughing?’ demanded he very angrily. ‘ What may that be at?’

“ ‘ Why,’ returned I, ‘ at the extraordinary powers of metamorphosis, in a calling which can send a gentleman

forward on an expedition as an ambassador to make him return a thief!"

"On this, your worship, issue was joined forthwith. Mr. Midshipman had the kindness to propose a turn out and a mill in the middle of the room; but seeing that he was twice my stature, I told him he was very kind, but that gentlemen should settle their little discrepancies in a far different mode. A meeting, therefore, was arranged for the following morning, and the seconds being duly chosen, we separated to retire to rest.

"By times in the morning my gentleman was with me. What think you?" said he, "I met our adversaries but just this instant. What have you got there?" said I to the second, who was carrying a large bag.—A brace of ship's pistols, was the reply. Next to him, up came the midshipman, with a couple of old muskets in his hands, and his hat stuffed so full of something that it would scarcely remain on his head. Muskets! exclaimed I, what may those be for?—In case the pistols won't go off. Then what's that stuffed into your hat?—Oh, *that*?—that's only eighty rounds of ball cartridge!"

"Why, Jeremy, it's well you live to tell the tale—but how did you manage to get out of it?"

"Simply by going through twelve fires without effect, sir; after which we flung away our tools, shook hands, and went to breakfast."

"Ah, Jeremy, this must prove a somewhat different affair; but as a man need not neglect his health in the interim, get the horses to the door."

CHAPTER XX.

Which contains the narrative of a duel, generally supposed to have been fought in earnest.

“ JEREMY,” said I, as we rode along, “ I am glad you are in some degree acquainted with the forms of honourable manslaughter called the duel, for now I come to think of it, you must stand as my second.”

“ With all my heart, your worship, but I hope in this case we shall have no revival of that heathenish custom of blood-shed passing between any but the principals. As your worship’s valet, I have no right to pretend to a contention with the thews and muscle of the Honourable Colonel Rugby.”

“ Fear nothing—thy hide shall remain as peaceably whole as my Lord Mayor’s—for saving him who rubbed Wat Tyler down, their wars have been principally levied on the natives of Ascension.

“ In order, therefore, that you may take upon yourself the honour of my squire at arms, you are henceforth my secretary. So take heed in your conversations with this said colonel, that he espies nothing amiss in thee, or to the felicity of fighting with his friend, I shall be compelled to add the happiness of trying to put a ball through himself. Listen, therefore, while I put thee through the paces of a modern murder of honour.”

Chatting thus, we completed our ride, and returning to dinner, the time appointed drew nigh. As I was preparing to set off, it came on to rain hard, while the wind, setting in a stiff gale from the south-west, promised a continuance of bad weather.

This is nice for fighting, thought I, and having waited till within a quarter of an hour of the time, I was about to set off for the place of meeting, when I received a second note from the colonel, putting off our rendezvous till day-break on the ensuing day.

Having sent a reply in the affirmative, I gave instructions to Jeremy to alter, as might be requisite, the arrangements

which he had made in case a sudden departure should become necessary, and then went to bed.

Scarcely had I laid my head on the pillow, when I remembered that the ensuing day was the Sabbath. To what a pitch then have I arrived, was my natural soliloquy, when such a morning is appointed for such a purpose, and in such a cause?

Starting from my couch, I went to the window. The weather had slightly moderated, and I sent a message to Rugby, expressing my wish to meet C—— within an hour. Rugby himself at once agreed, but his principal refused. I had now nearly declined the affair in toto, but knowing that my motives would be misconstrued, I was weak enough to yield acquiescence.

At an hour before day-break Jeremy was at my bed-side, and rising with a heavy heart and a reproachful conscience, we took our way towards the ground. The rain had ceased for some hours, and the wind having veered to the northward, blew coldly and piercing as we hurried along.

Having passed the gate and bent our steps towards the left of the harbour, the air grew more fresh and inspiring as it came directly from the sea, whose hoarse roar now sounded in our ears. For some time we pursued our way over the little sand-hills which form the ground in this direction, and at last arrived near the beach. Almost at the same moment we discerned, approaching from behind, the two figures of the opposite party.

Quickly descriyng us, they advanced within thirty paces, and then the colonel came forward alone. Taking him aside, I asked if he had narrated the facts I had communicated to him.

He replied that he had done so exactly, but that they had been received with the utmost disbelief and rage—so much so, that C—— had expressed his determination that no effort of his should be spared to prevent my ever quitting the ground alive. To this end he wished to know if I had sufficient courage to consent that our seconds should not interfere, but stand at a distance till the combat was in one way or another decided.

Shocked and angry at the blood-thirsty disposition displayed in such a message, I replied, with some warmth, that it was indifferent to me how we fought, and that if it would particularly please the savage, it should be with a pair of ragged razors, or if this was not sufficiently brutal, why then with our teeth.

The colonel replied, that he shared my sentiments on this point, and to dissuade his principal from indulging in such feelings, had done every thing in his power short of returning home, which he hardly liked to do after coming from such a distance. He added, that the provocation C— supposed himself to have received, could alone excuse his revengeful sentiments.

Desiring the colonel to hasten on his arrangements, as daylight seemed soon about to break, he went up to C—, and having repeated my consent to his proposition, Jeremy measured out the ground, under the colonel's superintendence, while the latter was to give the word for firing.

The order of the duel was to be thus:—we were to fire at ten paces, holding our naked swords in our left hands, and if the shots took no effect, we were then to rush on one another with cold steel.

While the ground was measuring, I turned away to take what I thought was, in all probability, my last look of the fair universe. How transcendently bright appeared the sky on which I had so often gazed with rapture, and where already the starry host grew pale at the approach of day. The fresh and glorious ocean, which had ever excited the deepest emotions in my bosom, rolled its deep, heavy waves not far from my feet—never again might they bear me exulting on their surface—a touch on the shoulder from Jeremy, reminded me that the ground was ready.

Turning round, I perceived that C— had taken up his position, and, to my astonishment, stood stripped of his coat and waistcoat.

The only level spot fit for our purpose, was between two little ridges of sand running down towards the sea, and this being rather marshy, I observed also, that C— was standing up to his ankles in water.

I was advancing to take my position, dressed of course, as I was, when, more to my surprise than any thing that had yet occurred, Jeremy stepped up to me and said, with the tone of a man accustomed to move among equals of no mean rank—“Mr. Montague, unless you put yourself on an equality with an antagonist who thinks fit to disencumber himself to the utmost, I cannot act as your second.”

In compliance with this observation, I also drew off my coat and waistcoat, and receiving my weapons, took up my ground. The seconds having retired to some distance, I heard the word “*Prepare*,” and then—“*Fire*.”

The discharge of my adversary's weapon took place—I

felt myself unhurt, and turning towards the sea, fired my ball over its surface, flung the pistol on the ground, and waited the onset of my opponent. I had not long to complain of his tardiness; seeing that I would not advance, he made a couple of springs, and then, entangled with the marshy weeds fell.

Looking at me as if he feared I would take advantage of this accident, he struggled hastily, but in vain, to rise, when, finding I still remained on my own ground, he recovered himself—came more slowly forward, and then, as if the prey were at once within his grasp, made a sudden lunge at my breast.

This I parried, at the same time keeping down my anger to the utmost, for I felt that I was already wounded in the sword arm. As my object was only to guard myself and tire out my adversary, I made no attacks in return for his, and after the continuance of the contest for some time, with the most determined fury and hatred on his part, I began to watch an opportunity to disarm him.

Suddenly my foot slipped, and I felt the cold steel of his sword pass through my right side—the hilt coming against my ribs. This put the finishing stroke to my moderation of temper; imagining myself to be mortally wounded, I drew back my sword arm, now stiffening from loss of blood, and made a thrust at his throat.

His left hand being still at liberty, he beat down my blow, and, in turn, my sword became locked in his grasp. We now struggled desperately for some minutes, the mud and water splashing around us, and already not a little discoloured by the sanguine streams that both our various wounds had contributed to it.

Seeing that this must end in the defeat of one of us, I made a desperate spring forward, and then as sudden a retreat, at the same time drawing my sword with all my remaining strength through his left hand, which it cut horribly.—My own weapon was now free, while I still retained the mastery of his.

“Ask your life!” said I.

“Never!” was his reply.

“Then yield your sword!”

“I will do neither.”

“Think of it again!”

“Never!”

“If I allow you to draw your rapier out of my body what will you do?”

"My best to run it through your heart."

"Sanguinary, wretched creature!" I exclaimed, raising my arm to terminate this scene—then pausing once more—"Tell me," said I, "if you are allowed again to commence the duel on equal terms—will you acknowledge your belief in all I have narrated to your second—and when I am gone, assert your wife to be as innocent as she is?"

"Innocent!" repeated he, "as soon assert she is immortal."

He said no more—every drop of blood remaining in my body rallied to my heart.—Passing my sword twice through his body, he sank upon his knees, exclaiming, "I am slain."

Something there was in this brief ejaculation which even then drew largely on my pity.—At those low, melancholy, dying tones I looked down upon the collapsed features of the bleeding body;—rage was succeeded by remorse, and apprehension for my own life by despair for his.

Turning with a shudder of horror and disgust from the contemplation of my own deed—my eyes rested on the sea.—There rose the sun, all pure and glorious, from its rolling bed, now crimsoned by its early rays.—The breeze swept past my cheek as when, in days of yore, it only brought joy and healthfulness to cheer my youth!

And this was the Sabbath—the day of rest for Him, at whose bidding Creation had arisen, and, first of all its wonders—Man!—And was this the day I had chosen for his destruction?—The curse of my Maker seemed at that moment to descend upon me. Dimness of vision came over me, the little strength remaining appeared to desert me, and my conscious heart to acknowledge the withering feelings of a second Cain.

CHAPTER XXI.

Which treats of some of the results of "*Pleasure!*"

ON coming to my senses, I found myself in the arms of Jeremy, who, by dint of pouring brandy down my throat, brought me once more back to life, and assured me that I

had considerable chance of still retaining my vitality, since my wounds, which he had hastily bound up, were mostly superficial.

Thanking him from my heart, I cast my eyes around, and beheld the Colonel at a little distance, doing the last kind offices for his friend.—I would have advanced toward them, but this Jeremy positively prevented, saying that was much more reasonable for me to save myself, than trouble by my presence a dying man, who already had too good reason to hate me to the utmost.

Acquiescing in this sad truth, I turned my steps once more towards the town, and finding on our way a donkey that had apparently strayed from its tether, I took leave to mount it, and supported by Jeremy, who urged the beast forward, we quickened our pace.

Since the days of my wild adoption of the chimney sweep's character, I had never mounted the back of poor Dobbin, until now—I recalled, with regret, the morning in which I had first made my escape in that capacity, and would have given much, indeed, to have leaped back to such trivial errors.

On arriving at the hotel, we found every thing ready for our instant departure, except the fair and unfortunate Frances—the “teterima causa.”

Writing her a note that her presence was immediately required below, I got her into the carriage, and as we drove on, proceeded to explain, that having lost a considerable sum of money on the preceding evening at cards, I had been so foolish, as under the influence of wine, to give a bond for immediate payment; but that since unfair play had been used, I had called the offender out, and leaving him wounded on the field, was obliged to fly into the neighbouring state of Flanders.

My wounded arm, my whole appearance, and the circumstantial air with which this was told, completely passed on the belief of one so inexperienced. Absorbed with what she conceived to be my danger, she inquired no farther, and it was with as much surprise as relief, that I at length found myself within an unoffended territory.

Having knowledge enough of surgery to distrust my own opinion in my own case, I lost no time in placing myself under the care of one from whom I should find justice. The wound on the right side was the only one which now gave me any concern, and had it not been for the quantity of blood lost on the field, I should have fared but poorly.

The inflammation was, by this means, kept down greatly, and a close examination of the lacerated parts leading to the discovery of no injured organ, I found I had only to remain quiet, in order to regain my health.

The surgeon having given his instructions, left me to my meditations, which naturally reverted to the melancholy scene of the duel. In truth, I had been utterly unable to banish it even for the shortest period from my mind.

This repose, disturbed and uneasy as it was, soon became doomed to even more imbibited interruption.

Jeremy having gone out of my room with the surgeon, returned after some time with a countenance announcing some fresh misfortune. His story was soon told—exaggerated reports of the late duel had suddenly arrived, and some of the people of the hotel, ignorant of her connexion with the parties concerned, had communicated all the particulars to Frances as a mere matter of gossip.

On a mind already predisposed to sink beneath the state of tension, in which it had long been kept, these rumours produced the worst effects, and her servants having in vain endeavoured to manage her, now sent to me in alarm at the state in which their mistress remained.

Hurrying to her side, I found her relapsed into the miserable state in which she arrived at Dover, alternately agitated by the most frightful convulsions, or seemingly sinking into the arms of death from the depression consequent.

With what indescribable anguish did I gaze on those features, and consider that all this suffering was caused by me. Alas, where could I seek either succour for my victim, or comfort for her destroyer.

On one side of her bed stood the physician and surgeon I had called in;—all their arts had failed—before them lay the unhappy girl,—muttering in a tongue they knew not, words that went to my very soul—for they called on her husband in the fondest accents of love, to forgive and pardon her, and to spare—me!—

Had she said aught beside—had she heaped the most withering curses on my head, I could have borne my lot—but her intercessions for my safety!—these were, indeed, the burning coals of Scripture.

If I looked into my own heart—there was hell. Heaven itself was no longer heaven to me. A murderer and an adulterer—I had no portion there.—In silent agony and remorse I seated myself beside her couch to wait the event,

which to all appearance was to send into a future state another soul, unrepentant, unannealed, to witness against me.

By degrees her complaint assumed another form—the colour once more revisited her cheek, the eye was again lit up with a dazzling lustre. The muttering grew more distinct—eagerly I watched the change, and breathlessly stooped to catch her slightest wish—but it was only a change of sorrow into horror, when I perceived that she could no longer recognise me—when I heard that her tongue was only loosened to give utterance to the wildest delirium.

Before midnight it required the strength of two servants to keep her in her bed, as she raved of a thousand madnesses, beneath the burning influence of a brain fever.

CHAPTER XXII.

Shows how one error paves the way for another.

As I sat by the bed-side of the unfortunate Frances, night after night, and day after day, thus listening to all the horrors which by turns assailed her disordered imagination, I had full leisure to exercise those faculties of reasoning which had too long slept within me.

To the idle, the frivolous, and the superficial—the man who had succeeded in winning the affections, of a woman at once amiable, lovely, accomplished, and high-born—who had succeeded in carrying off her person, and even more, of escaping from the revenge of her husband,—such a man, in the heartless cant of “the world,” would be termed lucky, fortunate, and happy.

Contrasting such a description with my own situation, I had indeed a bitter proof of how little either term was borne out by the reality!

To be relieved of the sorrow and the remorse then pressing on me, what would I not have been? The humblest lot, the direst slavery would have been repose and blessed quiet, so that it restored to my bosom, that upholding spirit

of self-approval which passeth show, and defies even the whirlwind of man's evil passions to disturb its tranquillity.

But in proportion as I sighed for that which I felt I could never more possess, so did my perturbation and dejection increase.

To attend the dying victim of my mingled folly and weakness,—to proffer from my own hand all that it was necessary for her to take,—and sleeplessly to listen to every fevered accent, was my only occupation. My own wounds were forgotten, or if remembered, it was only with a silent prayer, that they might be the means of yielding me a passport from that life, which in the very hour of security and possession was rendered a burden too heavy to support.

In addition to all the other subjects of sorrowful contemplation, was added, that of the apparent inevitability of the death of Frances. Having been bled to a great extent, we now feared lest she should sink into that low typhoid state, which so frequently proves fatal to those whom even the acute form of the disease has spared.

The hour that was to dispel or verify my fears drew nigh; by degrees sensibility of external objects returned to the poor sufferer, and in the faintest accents she whispered to me her conviction that she was dying. Too truly I feared it—I was her murderer!—but endeavouring my best to comfort her, I said something—though hardly conscious what—of life being as uncertain in its ebb as flow.

Gazing up with an expression of tenderness, that death itself can scarcely efface from my remembrance—she faintly shook her head, and turning upon her pillow, burst into tears. As soon as she regained sufficient composure, she whispered her wishes for a clergyman of the Protestant religion, to administer to her the last consoling rites of Christianity.

Having sent Jeremy, on the instant, to procure, if possible, a compliance with her wishes, I demanded if there were no other point on which it was possible to gratify any feelings she might, at this awful moment, entertain.

She spoke not; but from the fixed nature of her glance, I at once perceived that something still remained upon her mind. I pressed her to disclose it to me, and feeble as she was, she made the effort; then, as if checking herself, she once more turned away from me, and once more found relief in weeping.

She now sunk into a state of repose. Whether this arose from over-excitement, whether it was sleep, or whether—

for her lips moved—she was engaged in prayer, I know not; but intensely absorbed as I was in my own dark reveries, a considerable time elapsed, interrupted only by the return of Jeremy.

Success had attended his efforts, and he announced the speedy coming of the pastor of a small flock of the Protestant faith. In a few minutes afterwards this gentleman was announced to be below.

Having descended to meet the clergyman, I explained to him the wishes of his intended communicant, and begging him to be careful that she might be as little excited as the sacred nature of his duty permitted, I ushered him into the sick chamber, and withdrew.

Again and again, in moments of horror and despair, I have recurred to that space during which I listened for the return of the good priest. Nothing can equal, in the mere sufferings of imagination—those which I then underwent. In the times—how uncertain and how rare, in which some glimpses of happiness have still, by stealth, revisited me—the recollection of that pause—of all that followed—all that preceded it—these have ever returned to envenom the few fair moments of existence that have since been left to me.

A crowd of horrible images, imaginary and real, forced themselves upon me—yet nothing plain or palpable relieved my mind from the rack that my own folly had so long and so sedulously prepared for its fortune. A touch on the shoulder aroused me from my trance. I turned, and the venerable figure of the clergyman stood before me.

“My son,” said he, in accents of true kindness, as he took my hand, and led me towards the window; “pardon me for seeming to pry into your affairs; but, unless the whole of my duty shall be discharged, it were better that I had staid away.”

“Speak on, speak quickly—fear not but that I will hear. Alas! wretchedness has brought to me to a humility that can brook the truth, however unpalatable.”

“Heartily do I rejoice to hear these words—unpalatable, if my words must be, they shall at least be few—your unhappy lady is, I too truly fear, dying.”

“Alas, too truly!”

“At your hands then, my son, has she nothing of which to complain?”

“Of much—too much—of every thing! Oh, would I could repair the mischief I have done—repair even the hundredth part of it!”

"Heaven be praised that you have the wish: for of the opportunity I was even now about to speak to you."

"Speak on, then, and be it what it may, I will consider that I stand already pledged. To what, my kind friend, do you allude?"

"To the sanction which the rites of the church can yet confer upon that unhappy lady's love. This alone is wanting to sooth the last moments of her whose untimous end has been brought upon her by——"

"My crimes—True! True—all too true! Heaven, I am justly stricken!"

A new gulf of horror seemed to open before my failing vision as I sank upon the nearest chair.

"Dear sir, you are greatly moved," said the clergyman, seating himself near me—"surely more so than the matter demands; for what mind possessing aught that is right in principle, would refuse to acknowledge the justice of the claim?"

"I do, I do acknowledge it!"

"Then, wherefore hesitate?"

"Give me but time—in pity, but a moment's time—to consider a step so momentous—I may say, so awful!"

Strange—mad—impossible as it may appear—never until that moment had I remembered that I—I myself was married!—Now, when too late, the recollection of the fact returned to me with damning accuracy, while the small restless monitor proclaimed within me—"What a wretch art thou!"

"Hesitate no more!" said the clergyman, interrupting me amid the thoughts under which I was then writhing. "it is but a slight atonement, and for a short time—a few brief hours at the most—perchance a few fleeting minutes, and Death will claim the bride."

"Be it so, then," said I, giving him my hand with an inward shudder, and following him to the chamber of the dying Frances.

How little did I once think of such a climax! was my soliloquy; but since the ceremony and belief of our marriage was to smooth and lighten the dark passage to the grave—mine in future be the suffering and the guilt. For surely enough of both had been brought upon her by my means.

Deliberate as was the crime I was about to commit, strange to say it relieved my own mind of no slight self-reproach. I was glad to prove, even to myself, that there still existed

within me something to mitigate the selfish course which for the last few months I was conscious of having pursued.

The consideration also of the clergyman's last argument helped to drown my own misgivings. Life in my victim was to all appearance ebbing fast, and to-morrow I might be—

A shudder, which I could not suppress, interrupted the conclusion, and looking up I became sensible that the clergyman had already commenced that solemn ceremony which I was about to desecrate.

Strange anomaly of that most anomalous of all created objects—the human heart! How often do we not blindly rush on that which every feeling of our better nature tells us to abhor. A kind of stupor came over me from the first of the ceremonial until its conclusion.

A thousand feelings prompted me to pause, but, as though the strength to do so was denied me, I sat beside the bed writhing like one under the oppression of night-mare, and half expectant that I was still to wake from such a feverish dream.

But stern reality had, indeed, fixed its seal upon the deeds of that hour.

Bewildered, and scarcely conscious of what I had done, I arose—the marriage was concluded, and imprinting a trembling kiss upon the cold and pallid brow of my dying bride, I rushed from the room to curse myself—my destiny—and more than all, that mad and reckless want of principle, which had lost me—friends—fortune—fame—happiness—yes! and, dearer than all, the latest and the last—my peace of mind, and self-esteem.

BOOK THE SIXTEETH.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Narrates our punishment.

HAVING retired into my own sitting-room, I remained waiting a considerable time for the return of the clergyman. He, at length, made his appearance to tell me that the mind of his communicant appeared greatly relieved, and that having taken two glasses of port wine, she had fallen asleep.

Consigning him with many thanks to the attendance of Jeremy, I returned to my post, there to watch and weep—to watch that which no longer needed watching, and to weep for actions that could never be recalled.

At their usual hour in the evening, the physicians made their appearance, but their patient still slept, and I would not allow her to be disturbed. We could only perceive, that the skin lately so parched and burning, now exhibited a more moist and soft appearance.

As we turned from the room, one of the oldest of the medical attendants remarked to me, that I might, at length, entertain some slight hopes of her final recovery.

Recovery!—that word alone sank to my soul with an icy chill. A few days since, and I could not have believed that my heart had trusted in the death of her I loved. Turning from them with a feeling of self-disgust, that nothing could surpass, I stretched myself along the temporary couch that I had caused to be made in Frances' room, and there watched for dawn, in all that anguish of mind which I had so studiously been preparing for myself.

The morning came at last, and with it Frances at length awoke—no longer beneath the shadow of death's funeral wing, but as one to whom the freshly blooming vale of

health and youth is still open to tread in joyousness and beauty. Weakness alone now remained of her late severe illness; but strength soon returned, the colour once more revisited her pallid cheek, while eyes that had so nearly slept for ever in the tomb, were again permitted to shine in all the loveliness which had distinguished them at our first meeting.

The elasticity of her spirit alone was wanting; that, alas, had flown never to return. But I will not prolong her hapless story. Deeply as I felt the hourly reproach which her presence cast upon me, I could not prevent myself from feeling the liveliest interest in her. The more so, as time promised to add a link to our union, which had unfortunately been denied to that with her husband.

Some weakness which we could not explain still seemed to linger round her, and a warmer residence was recommended in the south of France or Italy. The seaport of Salerno was the spot on which she fixed, and thither, with the loss of as little time as possible, we now repaired.

At this time travelling was, by no means, either as safe or amusing as we could desire. The seven years' war had just burst out in Germany, while Italy had for some time been desolated by the same burning breath.

But there had fixed upon my spirit a low and restless fever, that craved for change as the only semblance of happiness that was left to me. After much trouble and some adventures of a more threatening aspect, we at length arrived at Salerno.

Change of climate and the consciousness of a greater distance from the scene of her sorrows, soon gave to Frances every appearance of a perfect restoration to health. Had I still been able to command the light-heartedness of former days, we might yet have been most happy.

This, however, I could not do—now when I least wished it, the scales had fallen from my eyes—a constant and unceasing melancholy preyed upon me, and the curse of my own deeds fell back upon my spirit too heavy for endurance.

At first, the efforts of Frances were directed to dissipate the gloom, and finding these to be ineffectual she could only share, and thereby increased it. Thus passed some months, the darkest and most sad that I have ever known.

Letters had more than once or twice arrived for me from England, but as I was not in want of money—thanks to my friends, Levi and Moses—I had not courage to explore

their contents, and flung them by for a daring mood;—despair and courage sometimes prompt to the same deed, and having waited in vain for the latter, it was the former alone which led me one morning to break the fatal seals.

Among much miscellaneous nonsense, I now learnt with the utmost astonishment that the husband of Frances had not only survived the duel, but that notwithstanding the serious effects of his wound, which had considerably affected his health, he was on the point of obtaining a divorce. My feelings on reading this paragraph I know not how to describe.

My relief at finding myself no longer under the ban of murder, was immeasurably great; while, on the other hand, I had married another man's wife, even while my own was living.

The more I thought of it, the more it festered in my mind. Scruples that hitherto had slept, now sprang into life, and with all the wish to be apathetic, I grew to be what was most the reverse.

In proportion as Frances observed this disposition on my part, her efforts to amuse me became greater, but her powers less. My gloom grew to be contagious, and her health declined. The fact of her husband's existence I still kept a profound secret; but the catastrophe was not to be retarded.

As the time approached that was to call into life the fond and anxious feelings of a mother in her bosom, my fears took a new direction, and never did I look at the wasted form of the heart-broken girl beside me, without anticipating the doom that hung over us.

Too quickly did the hour of its fulfilment arrive—the final penalty of broken vows was not to be evaded, and the morning that gave a son to my arms, took from them the hapless mother.

CHAPTER XXIV.

I resolve to close the scene with what little credit may be left to me.

For some time after the death of Frances, I remained in lethargic stupor, caring for nothing, scarcely conscious whether I lived or not, and utterly without thought on any one subject.

Having, on the morning after her decease, given orders that she might be embalmed with such skill and care as the neighbouring city of Naples enabled Jeremy to obtain, it was only on the week after her death that I woke up to the life around me, and demanded to see my child.

At this request, Jeremy grew pale, and without attempting to move from his seat, hesitated in his answer.

"Is it so?—I understand," said I, at once comprehending what I had observed—"The child is with its mother then?" Jeremy made a motion of assent.

"Since when?" I demanded.

"The fourth day after its birth."

"Then they are both embalmed together?"

"I thought that would please you, and so it has been done."

The sense of loneliness that then came over me, was indeed dreadful—well will those remember who have felt it! Mother and child—both gone!—both taken from me! The possession of the mother was guilt, and to her loss I could bow in acknowledged justice of the sentence. Her presence and her living anguish was a reproach to me, for I had caused it—but her babe—my helpless, innocent, little boy!

Neither of these feelings attached to him, and in the deep and long-enduring grief of future years to have gazed on him—to have traced in his features the likeness to that mother I had so fatally loved—to this I had indeed looked forward with the strong hope of a wounded and repentant spirit; and when these thoughts came over, and with them the remembrance of her touching beauty, and the still dearer qualities of her mind, I felt it as a torrent utterly

too strong for resistance, and falling back upon my pillow, burst into a paroxysm of tears.

Our duties to the dead are soon performed. To commit the bodies of Frances and her child to the repose of some sacred resting-place was all that remained for me, and then to die! I could not bear that they should moulder in the loathsome tomb, exposed to the slimy worm, and every thing most abhorrent to human feelings; I determined, therefore, to build a place of sepulture, to which I intended that my own remains should be carried. At the bottom of the grounds belonging to our villa was a little hill, or tumulus, just outside our walls.

One or two trees, and a few shrubs, grew on its summit; and it had been the remark of Frances and myself, that the sunlight seemed to linger there with a sacred and a secret pleasure, while the thrush and the nightingale were heard in alternate and eternal harmony, the choristers of the spot.

Having purchased this piece of ground, I had a cemetery built upon its crest, in the form of a small Doric temple. The roof was arched and cut into open work to admit light and air. Within were three niches. In two I placed the stone coffins of those, Death had already taken; the one remained vacant for myself.

As the sunlight strained in from the fretwork above, it produced a strange effect—at once beautiful and melancholy in the extreme—to watch the shadows cast by the foliage of the surrounding trees, quivering in contrast with the bright light upon the marble floor, while the branches yielded to the sweet breath of the south that sighed amongst them, a chorus and a requiem for the departed.

It was some time before I could summon resolution to quit this scene, for grief had now almost subsided into a pleasure; but when I looked into the world beyond—I felt disgust alone. In the whirlwind of passion the same scenes might yet remain to be enacted—and what was the worth?

Sometimes I determined to remain where I was—to seek in books the only solace that was left to me, and to sink down into the grave in sloth and apathy. But there was a restless fire within me that forbade this. The cowardice of suicide I despised—life was loathsome to me, if only from the memory of all I had sacrificed—fortune, ability, opportunity, and happiness. It is time, thought I, to gather my mantle around me, and to fall with decency.

After some deliberation, I turned my attention to the armies of Prussia. The sovereign of that country had already proved himself one of the greatest generals of the day. A mean and dastardly conspiracy had been formed against himself and empire, by the Northern cormorant of Russia, and scarcely less satiable vulture of Austria. In his ranks, thought I, there is at least some chivalry in being found to fight, and an honourable death for all who perish.

CHAPTER XXV.

We arrive at Dresden, and observe the court and camp of the great Frederick.

“—YOUR worship may at least offer your thanks to Squire Mercury for a safe arrival at the first stage of our murderous journey,” said Jeremy, as we put up at last in that most beautiful of the cities of Germany—Dresden.

Our coming was timed in the most happy manner. On our way from Italy, we had found quite enough of interruption to please any ordinary mortal, and a few days after our arrival came the news that France, Sweden, and Russia had declared war with Frederick, and ranged themselves on the side of the Austrian vulture, to say nothing of the army of the empire, and that of the defeated King of Saxony and Poland.

Preparations such as these, and the avowed intention of confederated Europe to annihilate one little kingdom, like that of Prussia, the sovereigns of which had, not many generations since, been mere electors of Brandenburgh, was enough to dismay one man.

But nature supports the victim for his suffering, and to judge from the balls, routs, and other gaieties with which Frederick entertained the Saxon court, apprehension from his enemies troubled him but slightly. At the time of our arrival, Augustus, the monarch *de jure*, had flown to shelter himself with his troops, then shut up in the fortified, but, alas! strictly blockaded camp of Pirna.

His amiable wife—a very fine specimen of the royal-shrew kind, lost no opportunity, in the mean time, of intriguing, right and left, in what she very pleasantly denominated, his favour; and in truth, I must say, from the exhibition of her talents in the art of annoyance, I do pronounce his majesty a lucky fellow, that she chanced to turn for, instead of against him.

It was her royal custom—Heaven bless her!—to send her chamberlain every morning to compliment Frederick, while

the rest of her day was spent in writing to the various courts of Europe, to inflame the minds of their sovereigns against him for his conduct to an innocent and deserving woman.

The fulness of her claim to this unassuming appellation, be it understood, she made out by numerous little innocencies, including the corruption of one of Frederick's favourite servants, who was detected in offering his master a cup of poisoned chocolate, as well as sending back puddings to her own royal spouse, well seasoned with a spicy correspondence—notes, letters, and what not; thus betraying to the Austrian generals whatever she could glean of the intended movements of the Prussian army.

However, it was her husband whose kingdom was subjugated under the hostile hoof of the invaders, and as we are not angels, we must not too narrowly scrutinize each other.

Few monarchs have been so accessible as the great man of whom I am now writing. On our passing into the city through the gates, I stated, in answer to the interrogatories put to us, that I had come to Dresden, for an interview with the king.

Thinking nothing farther of the matter, I had taken up my quarters at the best hotel I could find, proposing as soon as I had satisfied my curiosity in going over the palaces and picture galleries, the manufactories of porcelain, jewellery, musical instruments, and other matters, to present myself in due form to the warlike sovereign.

Greatly to my surprise I had hardly arisen on the ensuing morning, when an aide de camp attached to some general officer about the king's person, made his appearance. He came to inform me that my arrival and anxiety for presentation, had been made known to his majesty, and that he now waited upon me by order, to do me that favour with the Prussian monarch.

To a free Briton, this specimen of universal knowledge, would have been insulting beyond measure. It was startling even to me, an old stager, and accustomed for years to the system of passports and espionage of every description.

Rising on the instant, I proceeded to accompany the officer to the king's palace. Looking with admiration upon our way at the great tower, which distinguishes this structure, and rises to a height of some three hundred and fifty feet, I thought that his Prussian majesty was very much in the situation of a man who should stand upon its topmost pinnacles.

cle; one giddy moment, one false move would destroy him for ever.

On entering the room in which Frederick was occupied, I beheld a slight man, of stature below the ordinary height, but compactly made. He was standing with his back towards us, dictating an order to some general officer. His thoughts seemed to flow with great fluency, and considering the language in which he spoke, (French,) was not his native tongue, they were equally well and rapidly expressed.

His dress consisted of a blue coat turned up with red, with yellow breeches, and hussar boots; the respectable and well worn wrinkles of which, fell down about his ankles, and were of a dingy brown colour, most innocent of lamp-black.

On his head he wore the large cavalry hat of Prussia, cocked nearly across, or athwartship. His hair hung behind in a queue, with a carelessness of powder which bespoke a total abandonment of the dandyism that had distinguished his youth.

In one hand he held a gold snuff-box studded with diamonds, from which with the other he took large pinches of snuff, while the refuse falling on the shoulders of his secretary, greatly diversified his dark regimentals with its light brown colour.

Upon the ground were sporting three Italian greyhounds, two of them were playing with some of the torn leathern balls that lay scattered about the room for their accommodation, while the third was very properly absorbed in the duty of gnawing a hole in the great Frederick's brown boots.

The mother of this sportive progeny was stretched at length on a crimson damask sofa, that bore substantial proofs of the paws and teeth of her family.

The despatch being finished and the officer dismissed, the king turned round to chase the dog from his heels, when catching a sight of myself and guide, he politely made a motion as if to salute his hat, and advanced toward us.

“The English traveller?” said he, looking to the aide de camp, and speaking in one of the sweetest voices I think I ever heard.

The officer bowed.

“We are happy, Mr. Wortley,” said his Majesty, turning to me, “to see you at Dresden—you have expressed, I believe, a wish to be presented to us. May I ask in what way I can serve a subject of our royal brother and ally?”

"Your Majesty," said I, with a low bow, "can best serve me by allowing me to serve you, Sire; I am travelling for my pleasure, and wishing to take a lesson in the art of war, I was anxious, however remote from his person, to become a pupil of the greatest master of my time."

The king smiled. "This is the language of a court, Mr. Wortley; but you see," brushing some of the snuff from his yellow waistcoat, "that I am but a very plain soldier; and if you are really in earnest in your wish for fighting, we can indulge it very shortly to the utmost. In which of the English counties does your family reside?"

"Yorkshire, sire, principally—for my name by rights is Montague. I never use all my names except when travelling with my retinue, or as they say in the Scottish highlands, with my tail on."

"A Montague!—what, then we have a rival of the Capulets come to fight with us! I think, if I mistake not, there was a lady of that name not long since at the English court, celebrated for her wit and beauty, a Lady Montague—a daughter of the Duke of Kingston."

"I believe, sire, you now allude to my mother."

"Is it possible?—I hope you left her ladyship quite well."

"Quite, your Majesty—for any thing I know to the contrary—seeing that no communication has passed between us for years." Perceiving that the king slightly elevated his brow at this information, I added by way of remark—"For geniuses, sire, have not the best of tempers, from Voltaire downwards."

"How! Mr. Montague," exclaimed the king laughing, "not Voltaire himself safe from your remarks; perhaps you mean even to include ourselves in your sweeping censure?"

"Nay, in that case, may it please your Majesty, I should have said *upwards*."

"Fairly turned, sir, fairly turned," said Frederick, "and now we must say good morning to you, for what with detaining the intrigues of our friends, and preparing an agreeable reception for our enemies, the king's time is fully taken up; but if you will do Frederick of Prussia the favour of supping with him this evening, he will be most happy to see you—our royal brother of Saxony has very good quarters in his city, you will find, and on the acknowledged principle of giving to others what does not belong to yourself, you

must allow me to order you a corner. The gentleman who accompanied you hither, will put you in the way of seeing all that is worth observation, and while we remain at Dresden, I hope you will be well amused."

The king then made another motion towards his huge cocked hat, which I returned with my best salaam; and while he took his departure by one door, I backed out by another.

Prepared as I naturally had been to behold in the Prussian conqueror something beyond the ordinary mark of men, I was, I own, agreeably surprised to find him so gentle in his manners;—for despite of being better informed, we no sooner hear of one of warlike deeds, than vulgar rumour assists our imagination to conjure up some ogre of a creature with tusks and fangs—very different indeed from the reality.

On repairing to my appointment with royalty, the king introduced me to a fellow countryman, Field Marshal Keith, of whom he expressed himself in the warmest terms of admiration and regard. Our party consisted of not more than eight or nine, and the conversation flowed on in that easy strain which is so indispensable to the enjoyment of society.

My seat was on the king's right hand, and having discussed literature and the arts, their progress and encouragement in England, he asked me whether circumstances had made me much acquainted with the fiscal regulations of my country.

Knowing that this was a point to which in his own kingdom he had given considerable attention, I did my best to concentrate all the information I possessed on the subject, at the same time apologizing for not being more au-fait since I had served in the treasury.

"Ah," replied the king quickly, "a very sufficient reason then for being in perfect ignorance of all its details—'tis a pity to find you already a statesman in petto, a man of business in embryo. I am afraid you must be somewhat given to laziness—a failing which I assure you finds no quarter among us.—Surely this must be a sin of English growth, or you would not be troubled with those talkative gentry—your parliament.—In this quarter of the world we manage a state single-handed, with as much ease as you who have nine hundred or a thousand counsellors specially employed for the purpose."

"What then, your Majesty, you only admire the abso-

lute case—members of the British parliament should, I see, be very careful of showing themselves before you, sire.”

“Nay, on the contrary, could I meet with one wandering so far afield, I should be very glad to discuss some points between us, as the superiority of an absolute government over the representative.—Besides, you forget that the amiable little custom of subsidizing is a wonderful tie of affection on all allies.”

“Thank your majesty for the hint,” said I, “the next time that the Prussian subsidy comes on, you may rely, sire, on my being present; if possible, to swell the majority in your favour.”

“What,” said the king, “do you mean?”

“Simply that I have promised your Majesty a vote.”

“Are you then a member?”

“Yes, sire, and have been for years.”

“And what may your constituency say to your absence?”

“Why, sire, I hardly know, never having troubled myself to inquire, though, I believe, it weeps exceedingly over my loss.”

“Weeps exceedingly! I had thought the English corporations were more given to eating than weeping.”

“True, sire, considerably more, but I allude to the town fountain in the market place, which is all the constituency that I have the honour to represent.”

To this succeeded a discussion on the advantages resulting from rotten borough property.—The king maintaining it to be a violation of all decency, and I upholding the contrary.

In conclusion, I received an invitation for the ensuing evening, to a grand concert, where the king was, in person, to perform a long concerto on the flute.—As I went home, my mind was filled with the picture of this extraordinary man—a striking example as he was, of what a necessary, and often what a painful farce is royalty.

CHAPTER XXVI.

All that can be said of which is, that it is a chapter—but nothing more.

ON the ensuing morning Marshal Keith called upon me. A more pleasant gentlemanlike companion could not be desired. He brought with him a young Scotchman of the name of Strachan, who, by his own abilities and the marshal's favour, had gained a captaincy in the Prussian service.

I found his excellency full of anecdote, and anxious to be of all the use I could desire. Indeed, through him I was at once enabled to gain any request I could make, for no man stood higher in the estimation and experienced more of the personal favour of the king. But this, and the glory of his death in the full career of victory and honour, was all that he received, I believe, for his eminent services.

On expressing my surprise at the difference between Frederick as he appeared, and Frederick as he was painted, the marshal gave a knowing motion of his eye, and agreed with me that the comparison was greatly in his favour. I tried to find out whether the king's conduct was not somewhat assumed on the preceding evening, but he retained too much of the Scotchman to betray his real thoughts, if they were other than those of his lips.

On going away, he promised to introduce me to his friend, General Warney, whom he styled one of the first officers in the Prussian service, and than whom no one could prove a better master in all that related to the profession of a soldier, provided I could only persuade him to take me as a pupil.

"For," said the marshal, "you will find that he has a bee in his bonnet as well as the best of us,—but I leave ye, sir, to form your own conclusions. We have a saying in poor old Scotland,—would that these weary eyes might see its shores again,—'Let every herring hang by its ain tale.' " Two very significant nods followed this adage, and the kind-hearted marshal departed. In the evening we met

again at the concert, where the great Frederick having flouted all the old women into convulsions of applause, retired to sup and ponder upon schemes that comprehended in their grasp, the flagellation of the most powerful empires of the world.

“Pleased with this bauble still, as that before,
Till tired, he sleeps, and life’s poor play is o’er.”

The marshal was as good as his word, and taking me up to General Warnery, gave me the promised introduction. The general was a rough, snuff-taking German, with an eye quick as an eaglet’s. I soon found he was even more fond of sarcasm than his royal master, whom, though he greatly admired, he did not always spare in his witticisms.

He seemed to consider the profession of arms the very first, most enlightened, and noble upon earth; and if, upon so very brief an acquaintance with him, I might venture to give an opinion, he seemed also to have devoted himself to a close and unremitting study of all the masters who have written on the art of cutting throats,—from Cæsar downwards.

He had an opinion ready upon every system of tactics, every species of manœuvre, with a great sufficiency of authorities and precedents for all that he advanced. His stories were very droll, though he was not at all times particular in their selection or expression. Altogether, he was one in whose society you never found yourself *ennuyée*. He called Frederick “his gentle tiger, differing from all his race in this particular, that his skin would have been much more beautiful, but for the excessive number of its spots.”

CHAPTER XXVII.

Which shows how I and Jeremy got covered with glory and dirt.

In idleness of one description and another the time passed away, until at length, full of expectation, the Prussian army took the field.

I was, I must confess, most glad that the tedium of suspense was over; but, alas, what had I to hope? One by one the bright visions of my youth and manhood had vanished, and the opportunity of dying creditably was all I could expect—was indeed all I sought.

My feelings were notwithstanding very much changed since my arrival in Dresden. Then I sought death as a relief from grief—remorse and self-humiliation. The poignancy of these emotions had passed away, but the utter worthlessness and vapidity of existence had forced itself upon me with a double pressure. The usually dreaded anticipation of the grave now came like a relief to one for whom earth contained nothing fresh to please, nothing new to charm, like an infant that cries for sleep when the excitement of the day is over.

Having followed the advice of General Warnery, I took the field as a sort of aide-de-camp-general, at liberty, by permission of the gentle tiger, to attach myself to the staff of any general I pleased, but still paying the compliment to royalty of always choosing its immediate circle. Somehow I chanced to prove a favourite, though I scarce knew why; unless from the fact of my being free to say more than any of his own officers, yet taking care not to outrage my privilege.

The dress I had chosen was modelled on that of a regiment of guards, conspicuous for being at once serviceable, plain, and elegant. It consisted of a steel cuirass and buff dress, with a helmet. Jeremy wore the same, and acted as my orderly.

In the month of April, the army left Dresden, having been divided into four corps, commanded separately by the King,

the Prince of Anhalt, the Duke of Bevern, and Marshal Schwerin.

These forces altogether amounted to a hundred and ten thousand men; even with the troops of the English and Hanoverian allies, Frederick could only rely on possessing two hundred and sixty thousand troops, while those of his confederated enemies were supposed to exceed six hundred and eighty.

Owing to the fact of the Queen of Poland being in communication with the foe, it had for some time been the object of Frederick to mislead the allies through her.

For this means great pains had been taken to fortify the city of Dresden, and to survey the adjacent military positions, as if intending that the ensuing campaign should be of a defensive nature. Thus lulled, as it were, their surprise was complete, when the king's army entering Bohemia by different corps, marched directly on the city of Prague.

On the other hand, the forces of the allies not yet having had time for co-operation, were obliged to adopt the temporising policy which we had rejected—not but that the Austrians could have outnumbered us, but they generously withheld from a conquest in which their allies would have had no share, and so permitted us to advance.

To the Duke of Bevern, however, they were not so complimentary, and the troops under his command found their progress opposed by a superior force, under Count Koenigseck, amounting to twenty thousand men. It was said that the disposition of the enemy's troops was made by him in a manner deserving the highest praise.

Be that as it may, the Duke of Bevern found the Austrian strongly posted on a rising ground, with the town of Reichenbach on their right, and Geskenburgh on their left. The Duke lost no time in the attack, and on the twenty-first of April, had the glory of gaining the first victory of the campaign,—named, from the neighbourhood, the battle of Reichenbach.

Koenigseck now retreated upon Prague, Marshal Schwerin joined the Duke of Bevern, while the Prince of Anhalt, having already effected a junction with our detachment under Frederick, on the fifth of May, nothing but the Moldau divided the two portions of the army.

On the morrow, then, was to ensue a decisive battle. By all accounts, the enemy were still superior to us in force, and possessed of all the advantages of a position delibe-

rately chosen. On our side came Frederick,—Frederick the Great!—The very name alone, intimated the desperate efforts that would be made for victory, and the likelihood that it would be dearly purchased.

“Strange, indeed, will it be,” thought I, “to wander from every luxury and enjoyment of fortune beside the Thames, to fling away my heart’s blood upon a foreign soil and in a stranger’s quarrel on the banks of the Moldau.”

Even still more singular did it appear, when I reflected, that in the hostile camp, the chief commander was a distant relation of my own, through another branch of the Montague family,—Field-Marshal Count Brown, who, while the Prince Charles of Lorraine was the ostensible head of the Austrians, performed in reality all the duties of the station.

Vividly before me crowded the images of those whom I had so vainly but so fondly adored. Frances and her child seemed to stand beside me in the visions of the night, pale and wo-stricken,—sad and reproachful auguries of the fate that awaited me.

Starting from my sleep, I wiped the cold drops from my brow. Yet why should death appal me? Had I not sought it? Had not my tortured soul longed for the repose of its last resting-place?—Repose! Ah, was it indeed to prove repose?—Was there to be no day of future reckoning?—no retributive doom for hours mis-spent and energies lent but to folly?—And had life, indeed, been but this?—A torture!—and to one who had started with a determination to enjoy it to the utmost?

Who then had rendered it such? Would not a moment arrive, when I might perceive how ill-applied was such a word to the mere vexations of existence?—A moment when even these would, if possible, be welcomed back with joy? “Wretched being,” thought I, in conclusion, “I have sought this field of death; but of the many thousands who shall so shortly press it, few indeed can there be more unfitted than myself to die.”

At this moment the drum was heard, and unable to reflect with self-applause upon the past, I banished farther thought, and went forth to take my chance; though scarcely believing in the difference of a death which we have approached deliberately, and one which is suddenly thrust upon us.

A bridge of pontoons having been constructed without any serious opposition, our detachment of the army crossed the river and effected a junction with that under Schwerin,

already on the other side. The city lay on our right hand. The Austrians were drawn up on the hills immediately in front of us; having their right flank protected by some ponds, which, being partly dry and over-grown by grass, were by us taken for meadows.

The battle began immediately in front of us, and a small body of troops having been ordered forward against the enemy, I, like an inexperienced soldier, instead of waiting to see as much of the fight as might be permitted to me, at once clapped spurs to my horse, and followed by Jeremy, was soon in the thickest of the fight.

The Austrians at first gave way, and excited by success and the scene around, I pushed on, never doubting that the Prussians were close-behind me, and in the mean time was cutting and slashing at a most royal rate on the shaven skulls of the red cloaked Pandours, by whom I suddenly found myself surrounded.

A termination was however soon put to my conquests. Being rather quickly made sensible of something unpleasant affecting my left arm, I turned and found it nicely spitted near the shoulder, by the long slim lance of one of these irregulars, from the top of whose black cap there dangled a bunch of some half a dozen human ears, just in the way we should place as many tassels. Not being altogether pleased at his mode of making my acquaintance, I raised my arm to cut him down.

At this instant one of his brethren did me the very same favour. Something like a hundred weight of red-hot iron seemed to descend upon my head, and I was laid under the feet of my horse, who, feeling the lighter for the loss of his master, and not quite so super-valorous, scampered off to the river-side at full gallop.

The Prussians, in my quarter, were already in retreat; and when I could once more look about me, I beheld Jeremy pretty well stripped to the skin, in the hands of the Philistines.

To create no jealousy, they had placed me in the same situation, and were about to despatch the pair of us, but an Austrian officer coming up, took us out of their clutches, and placing us under escort, with a number of other prisoners, we were all very shortly and safely sent off, and lodged in the city of Prague.

"This is glory; your worship!" said poor Jeremy, looking at his nearly naked carcass, as we lay huddled together.

—“An excellent man was that same Sir John Falstaff; he had a knowledge of most things, and well did he say of this vain shadow, ‘I’ll have none of it!—so I say too. Ask me to share with you what you please, sir, but this; for, on my word, it does make me very sick, and gives me the mullygrubs, your worship!—even to think of it.’”

“Why, certainly, my good fellow,” replied I, “we have got into somewhat of a scrape, and as to glory, I have heard of men being ‘covered’ with it. Perhaps that may be our case, for I’ll be whipped if we’re covered with any thing else.—Be that as it may, if I escape this bout of head and arm, I’ll cry with you, Jeremy, enough.”

“That’s right, sir!—in such a case enough is infinitely better than a feast, depend on it; and now let me look to your wounds, sir, otherwise I fear they will be but little tented.”

In this, however, Jeremy was wrong.—The officer—a Welshman—who rescued us from the Pandours, had, it seems, heard Jeremy’s English tongue, and on the morning after the battle sent to inquire for us. I at once returned him the particulars of my name and family, as well as of our condition; and like a good Samaritan, he came and visited us in prison.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Which treats of old *Souffre-Douleur*.

THE name of the kind soul mentioned in the preceding chapter, was Lloyd, a very distinguished officer, who had long commanded in the Austrian service a corps of picked men—few in number, but the ablest and finest fellows he could possibly select. With these it was his custom to lie on the very outskirts of the two armies, and obtain the earliest intelligence of the enemy's movements. Frederick had often laid various traps for him, and would have been delighted at their success, “but,” as he remarked to me, “though my admiration of that extraordinary man is very great, I prefer to see the sun from the earth, rather than approach it any nearer.”

I found Lloyd irascible and sarcastic, but of a most able mind. Danger and hardship were to him mere words of sing-song. Indeed, from his utter contempt of privation and fatigue, he bore the familiar appellation of “*Souffre-Douleur*.”

No one could have been more kind to me, and many an otherwise weary hour was whiled away with his eccentric conversation and singular adventures. Having procured the entire liberation of myself and servant, on condition of our not serving again, he put me in the way of raising sundry moneys, through my never-sufficiently-to-be-respected friend, “*Moshes*.⁸”

Oh, *Moshes*!—Friend, guide, and counsellor of my youth!—How often when duns have afflicted and dice have betrayed me—when creditors have surrounded, and fortune has fled from me,—how often hast thou flown to me—consoled, relieved, aided, and abetted me, benevolent old Jew!—Even in my deepest and bitterest adversity, when didst thou ask more than “*chent-per-chent*?”

But to return to *Souffre-Douleur*. Nothing could have been more valuable than his services at this time. Fortune having favoured Frederick—although she deserted me,—

about one-half the Austrian army had taken shelter within the walls of Prague, and were most remorsely shut up.

To prevent these brave fellows from feeling that *ennui* so natural to such a situation, Frederick very kindly, as well as very hotly bombarded the good city.—On the whole, though, for a conqueror, he behaved very humanely, and was content with burning not much more than half of it.

As for princes, dukes, counts, field marshals, generals, &c., &c., these were so plenty with us that when we heard, in the course of the day, that such and such an officer had been killed by the explosion of a shell, the usual reply was, Ah, indeed!—count—*who* did you say it was?

To add to all the other comforts of the place, we were blessed with great scarcity for the time being, and the happy contingent expectation of famine in due time to come.

Of all these horrors, however, I had but slight experience, confined as I was by my wounds, and being by the kindness of Lloyd put into very good quarters, I experienced nothing more than the exorbitant prices to which all articles of food were raised. Happily for me no shell descended on my humble dwelling.

The wound on my shoulder proved the cause of little or no trouble, but the effects brought on by the sabre-cut on my head, restricted me to my bed-room for a considerable period. In the mean while, the battle of Kolin had been fought; Frederick defeated; and the city of Prague relieved.

On getting out once more, I found nearly one-half of the city in ruins, and the rest of so interesting an appearance as to render such a consummation doubly deplorable.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Which contains reflections on my past career.

Few men, unless they are of a most unthinking and superficial character, can be laid upon a bed of sickness, particularly one of a threatening and urgent nature, without reflecting on their past lives, and considering the time which is to come.

I have, in my day, met with many free-thinkers, but hitherto with none who have been utterly sceptical of a futurity of some description or another. For myself, however widely I might have wandered from the standard of what is right, according to the general notions of society, still my belief in religion had never of late years been shaken.

On the contrary, conscience had ever retained her power over me with the most despotic sway, though unhappily this was manifested, not as it should have been in the bridling of my passions, but only in the remorse occasioned by their indulgence.

The thoughts which had so vividly arisen on the eve of the battle of Prague, now once more returned. Once more I asked myself if it could be possible that I, who had enthusiastically broken away from the trammels of affection and custom, in search of unalloyed pleasure, had been only able to reap such a harvest of deep sorrows as those I had come through?

To men of warm imaginations and keen feelings, like myself, memory necessarily becomes, in ordinary cases, one of the greatest blessings and most refined enjoyments of life. Alas! how had I polluted its sweet fountain, until its waters had become those of bitterness unmixed!

Much and sincerely as I strove to direct my thoughts into different and less fatal channels, the society and affections of women seemed the whole aim and dream of my existence.

Yet, amid the numerous attachments I had formed, and all of which had terminated in certain pain to myself, on one alone could I look back without self-reproach and humiliation.

Poor Mary!—her mild and unpretending virtues lived for ever in my heart, while her faultless beauty and melodious voice haunted my imagination as freshly, as if but a few mornings since, I had first felt the influence of their charms in a situation than which nothing could be more affecting.

Alas! if Heaven had only granted me that treasure, what a different being might I not have been! From this my thoughts would wander to my fatal marriage—how like a dream did it appear—how often did I not pause to ask myself if it could truly be a fact, that I was bound for ever and indissolubly to such an ice-berg.

How much wild folly could I not trace back to this sad act. From the moment I discovered how fully I had completed my own ruin in that instance, the iron entered into my soul. Too proud to breathe a murmur of complaint—too strongly maddened at my own rashness to allow this topic ever to be mentioned in my presence, the pangs thus forcibly repressed worked double destruction in the bosom compelled to be their home.

Many, too many a regardless plunge into excess, could I not trace to the repugnant feeling that I was for ever bound; that I was beyond aid, and that even repentance—the last atonement man can make on earth—was useless here. At the time of my marriage, full of confidence and hope, and expectant of much happiness, I had entered on matrimony with a determination of strictly performing all the duties of life.

Utter disappointment in the party I had chosen—and next, utter hopelessness of retrieving the step I had taken, from the correct nature of her conduct—flung me at once into the ranks of those maddened by despair—the more completely so, that I dared not acknowledge it.

The sacred vows I had so lately and so cheerfully taken upon me became a mere nullity, until at length the breach of them was all that reminded me of their existence. Up to this period I had always paid attention to the observances of religion. But I soon felt unequal to the wretched mockery of entering the temples of my Creator and hear-

ing thundered from their altars a command, of the violation of which I not only knew myself to be deeply guilty for the past, but without the strength of character to resolve on abandoning for the future.

That mind must be strangely constituted indeed that will not be deteriorated, under such circumstances. Often did this truth press itself upon me as I advanced in life. The thoughtless idle, whom I well knew to be in the habit of amusing themselves with strictures on my life and conduct, little imagined perhaps that emotions of this deep and serious character were occupying my mind.

Often and often when going through the forms of attending in the House of Commons, and at the same time in reality taken up with all the dissipation and intrigue of London, have I turned aside on my road home, to watch the moonlight playing on the tracery of the abbey, and to think that I was doomed, lost child of darkness—shut out from all the beautiful consolations of religion, living without heed, and dying—if I should die suddenly—without hope!

How often have I gazed on the pure heaven with the consciousness of a criminal that had too often mocked it with the promise of a reformation to which the mind was never set—the heart was never given.

How long? was the question that arose to my lips—how long will this be allowed to continue? With a shudder I flew—not to reflect—not to meditate—nor to pray—but if my mind would permit it to my pillow—often to the gambling table, or perhaps worse, to that desperate excess of dissipation which at once ruins the constitution and enervates the mind.

Reflecting on these circumstances, it now occurred to me, that since I was in a position in which my circumstances and my religion were at variance, was it not possible, since I could not alter my circumstances, to look into the various articles of my creed, and see whether it was strictly consonant to nature and the history of man, as given to us by sacred writers. If not, I confess I saw no reason why I should not dissent from it.

I knew and felt how dangerous a ground this was, on which to tread, but the heathen might have the same excuse for continuing his idolatry; and after some farther consideration, I determined on seeing the Prior of a monastery long formed in Prague, by name the Scottish, although it

contained many within its walls wholly unconnected with that nation. The Roman mother, at least, thought I, provides for the depravity of man, by the institution of absolution, and if, on farther inspection of her creed, and a conversation with this reverend Prior, my opinion remains unaltered, I shall embrace her tenets.

CHAPTER XXX.

Which shows how the worthy Prior of Prague proceeded to relieve my scruples.

HAVING despatched Jeremy to procure me the assistance of the before-mentioned reverend Prior, I soon had the satisfaction of hearing the worthy pair arrive. I had been hipped and melancholy throughout the day, and had been imagining to myself the figure of the good father.—Picturing him a tall, lean, shrewd Scotchman, with high cheek bones, and small, quick eyes,—one by whose lights of knowledge the mistiness of my doubts and misgivings would be at once dispelled.

After considerable noise on the stairs, I beheld the door flung wide open, and a portly figure, in the canonical dress, with great difficulty edge itself into my presence.

“*Benedicite, my son!*” at once exclaimed the Prior, for it was he, advancing up to me, and laying his fat, heavy hand on my head,—“How fares it with thee?—Let me take a chair—*Deus vobiscum.* Soon will he administer greatly to thy comfort. Thy servant is a sharp, shrewd knave. Give us thy pulse. Scruples of conscience! quoth he—Clearly do we see at a glance what aileth thee. Doubts of faith!—Doubtless thy digestive organs have been deranged. *Salve nos!*—but it is a serious matter!—What has been thy diet, my son?—A plague on these bloody conquerors, they reverse the order of nature, and seem the only animals born without stomachs!—And so thou hast suffered in the wars? Ah me!

“Again on the knight, look’d the churchman old,
And again he sighed heavily,
For himself had been a soldier bold,
And served in Spain and Italy.

" Is it not a shame, now, of the Great Frederick to have brought thee, and many a pretty fellow more, to such a pass!—Tho' men do tell me that he is not so bad as he is painted!—They tell me, as thou hast served in the camp of the Philistines, peradventure thou mayest be able to confirm or deny the report,—men do say, that after all, the creature has sense enough to know a good meal from a bad one.

" Rare savoury dishes, I am told, are, to be met at his suppers and dinners, more especially when the lion reposeth in the den of his strength at Potsdam. Ah! if he would but direct his attention to the arts of peace, and import a few hundreds of cooks, of good sound attainments, into these gun and blunderbuss dominions! How would he not improve the national art of gastronomy in his empire, and so achieve something, at least, for which to be remembered by a grateful posterity! Truly is the present a perverse generation. What say you, my son? Is it not even so?"

The Prior being now, very fortunately for me, not a little out of breath, took time to recruit his lungs. This he appeared to do greatly at the expense of his sides, which heaved, and shook, and moved even the very room in which we sat. I confess I was fairly taken by surprise, and hardly knew what reply to make to such a very different outbreak of conversation from that I had expected.

" With respect to the many questions you have just put upon me, respected sir," I replied, " you are, as is generally the case with mankind, partly right and partly wrong. To pass, however, from these trivial matters. It is greatly my desire to consult you on subjects——"

" Not so fast, my son!—Truly, thou sayest well! Much need hast thou of sage counsel, good advice, and so forth—since thou canst so lightly denominate as trivial, affairs of vital moment."

" But, worthy Prior——".

" Worthy me no worthies!—*Salve nos!*"—crossing himself—" a most unworthy servant of Mother Church is he who now sits beside thee! Still, nihilominus, as we learned in the dead tongues remark—I clearly do perceive that thou art in no state to enter on such a discussion as that to which thou alludest! To nothing can the mind rightly attend unless the body be fitly sustained. When didst thou take thy morning meal?"

" About four hours since, good father."

" Four hours! Rash young man! no wonder thou art

brought to that pitch of lowness which thy servant describes! I thought by thy looks that thou wert fasting, and I knew by my own feelings," placing both hands most piteously on his rotund and sonorous capacity, "that there could be little doubt I was in the same error. Not a step farther can I conscientiously proceed in this matter, till I see thee duly dited. Let me consider!—What can we eat?"

"Say any thing, your reverence," interrupted Jeremy—"I'll warrant me, you find little difficulty in making good your words."

"A true saucy knave, this of thine, Mr. Wortley. So ho, sirrah!—Can you let your master have forthwith a cold capon may be, and a bottle of good old Rhenish—some of the true Johannisberger?"

"To be sure, your reverence."

"Why, that's right, and see thou dost not keep thy master waiting; for know, thou scape-the-gibbet, that patience is the only virtue the stomach ever sedulously escheweth."

"Ay, ay, sir! trust to me. I'll take care that no harm happen to the goodly gastronometer which your reverence seems to nurse so tenderly."

"Go to, thou saucy chatterbox! Dost thou think that thou art already free of my corporation, that thou waggest thy tongue so audaciously upon it?"

But Jeremy had closed the door, and ere the Prior ceased speaking, was already beyond his good-natured reproof.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Which treats of the deep learning displayed by the Prior in matters of conscience, and the still deeper capacity on matters of a different kind.

“ **W**ELL, my son,” resumed the Prior, as soon as the door had closed, “ talking of capons reminds me that thou must greatly miss those fine fat birds, that in my day were wont to delight the fainting traveller in the pleasant counties of Surrey and also of Sussex—to say nothing of those of Kent. Surely at times a regret must come across thee at having passed away from the especial regions of these ameliorated animals?”

“ **W**hy, no, good father, I cannot confess to entertaining any particular sorrow on that score. But suppose, while we are thus alone, we should enter on the subject of thy coming?”

“ **S**on, be not over-hasty! Already do I perceive how much harm this tendency of thine has brought thee—too hasty, I'll be bound for thee, was thy entrance into the army, and doubtless, also, too hastily for thy comfort was thy exit out of it. Beware of haste! This is a weighty and a serious matter, into which no good Catholic can enter suddenly, or without due preparation. Before I can at all advise thee, let me just see thee *in secularis*. If thou canst eat well, drink well, and sleep well, I see no reason why thou mayest not become a good Papist—or, at least, an excellent monk. Thy conscience may as yet be somewhat tender, but we will soon set thee to rights there.”

“ **V**ery well, good Prior! If thou wilt have it so, I must submit and remain quiet.”

“ **R**ight, my son! A quiet life is the best sign of a well-disposed mind—always supposing that thou takest enough

of exercise to protect thy health and keep thy appetites in order. But here comes the capon!—truly thy knave is a better knave than I had at first pronounced him. Truly, Jeronimo—Is that thy name?—I forgive thee thy quickness of answer in consideration of thy quickness of action. Set the capon before me—assuredly thy master is too weak to undertake the trouble of carving, whereas, also he hath fasted longer than myself to-day.”

Extending his hands over the doomed bird, the Prior said a brief grace, and ere I could look round a fine fat wing was before me.

“Help yourself, good Prior!” I was about to say, when glancing towards his plate, I saw the other pinion there already, and lest it should suffer from its loneliness, a leg and a moiety of the breast most comfortably kept it company.

“Worthy Prior,” said I, “are the duties of thy monastery heavy?”

Never a word did the Prior speak, but after some minutes giving his knife a temporary respite—“Talk not at thy meals, my son! It is a wilful tempting of the evil destinies! Little dost thou know the agony of choking!—Not so myself!—Thrice has beloved mother church nearly lost one of the most devoted of her children by this sad end. Warned by the past, I have, as in duty bound, taken measures to shield her from this calamity in future, and never from the time of early matins to the hour of vespers, or vespers to early matins, am I without this inestimable weapon as a part of my dress and accoutrements.”

As the Prior said this, he thrust his hand beneath the folds of his ample robes, and produced a slim piece of whale-bone, with a small sponge securely lashed at one end; the other being furnished with a long string by which it depended from an inner girdle.

“Why, good father, that is a probang, is it not?” said I.

“Even so, my son,” replied he, “and if in our future intercourse, it should ever be thy unhappy lot, to see me in *articulo mortis* as it were, lose no time—spring to my side—thou knowest where to find this second staff of life—as I may truly call it,—and so immediately thrust it down to remove the impediment afflicting me, in a manner which, presently, as soon as thou hast finished thy capon, I will display to thee on the person of thy servant.”

"Thank your reverence, most humbly!" cried Jeremy, starting back, "for your kind offer, but if you could only wait till I am choking before you come to my assistance, with your 'inestimable weapon,' truly you know not, how grateful I should feel."

"Grateful! thou varlet! who asked thee to be grateful?" somewhat indignantly replied the Prior. "Gratitude is a tenant but of noble breasts, and all we ask of thine is obedience—for what else art thou fitted? Tell me that!"

"Why, your reverence," replied Jeremy, with mock humility, "nature gives strength to the lion and cunning to the fox, and either may be useful to the other, if they would only have sense to agree. For me, your reverence, fasting is my forte, and as I humbly imagine, that is quite out of your line, so spare me but the infliction of your 'staff of life,' I engage to take upon me all your reverence's fasts as well as my own. That is, sir, for a little extra gratuity."

"Sayest thou so, sirrah!" returned the Prior, greatly pacified, "then once more let me remark, there is more good in thee than I had imagined. Fill me up then a goblet of Rhenish, that I may drink to thy amendment, and a speedy subsidence of those scruples of conscience that have so long, and so deeply troubled the soul of thy worthy master. My son"—turning to me, and pointing to the dish, "there still remains part of the back bone of this tender bird. What sayest thou?"

"No more, reverend father, the wing has sufficed for me," replied I, "look to yourself."

"Thou sayest truly, my son! We must put no affront upon thy meat, else wilt thou think but poorly of us."

As the Prior said this, he transferred from the dish the last remnant, and calling for more Rhenish, went on to finish the fowl; all of which he had of course despatched, with the exception of the wing I had taken. Having now duly used his napkin, and returned thanks, the repast was cleared away.

"Now, my son," said he, "touching this probang.—Since thy servant so rebelliously objects to have its use displayed on his person, we must have recourse to a lower order of the creation.—Hast thou ne'er a dog!—thy cat, methinks, may have too small a gullet," advancing to an

unhappy creature that chanced by accident to be in the room.

“ Stay, worthy father!” said I, arresting the progress of this Nemesis of feline destinies.

“ I do assure you I am perfectly skilled in the use of this ‘inimitable weapon,’ having some time studied surgery and physic, as every traveller is bound to do, and if any doubts remain on your mind, sit down—I will pass the probang incontinently through your own cesophagus, which will doubtless prove a far more satisfactory evidence of my skill than any other.”

“ Ay, truly, my son, is it even so?” quickly sliding the probang away to its place of rest. “ Right glad am I to know that thou hast seen to the estimable arts of healing, and so for the present, we will not trouble thee. Wherefore should we doubt thy word? Not to say that we are at this moment especially hurried away to shrive the lady abbess of a convent, not far distant from our own monastery.

“ And now, my son, touching thyself, we will take thy case into deep and serious consideration. The which we are the more readily enabled to do, inasmuch as we have this evening a private meeting at our convent of certain learned and abstruse men, deeply grounded in all trying points of doctrine.

“ But this, my son, remember I communicate to thee *sub sigillum*—under seal of confession, as it were. To these will I state thy wishes, and take sweet counsel with them how to advise thee. In the course of the evening it will be our duty to discuss—among other matters—one of the fine old German dishes—A boar’s head, roasted and flavoured with some of those delicate truffles, which, thou well knowest, my son, it is a happy provision of nature, that these very animals should discover with their tusks. If it should happen, as it doubtless will, that thou seest the superiority of our persuasion and adoptest it,—we will consider whether thou canst not be admitted of our society as an honorary or extra member, or lay brother. To one like thyself wavering, it may, doubtless, profit thee much; and now then, my son, for the present *Vale*.

“ Let thy servant precede me down these stairs, for truly they are steep, and we must not hazard the welfare of the church by endangering the lives of her zealous servants. *Vale*, my son, *Vale*!”

And with cautious steps the Prior edged himself once more out of the doorway, and followed Jeremy down stairs. Having safely cleared these dangers, he sent my servant back to tell me what he had forgotten, that I was to be sure and wait on him at his convent, an hour after vespers were concluded.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Which shows how I was first introduced to the Priors of Prague, and how these learned and sedate brothers proceeded to "minister to a mind diseased."

"WELL, Jeremy," said I, "what think you of that dignitary?"

"Why, sir, to say no worse, that Priors are like most other people—saving they're considerably fatter.—Save us, I wonder into how many ordinary people, yonder respectable gentleman would roll out? and to think of his probang too! Oh, myself, Jeremy, and oh! Tom, thou cat! what a lucky escape have we not had. Ay, truly, Hannibal, the passer of the Alps, was nothing to this passer of whale-bone and sponges. But to see, sir, how soon the good man was quieted, when the bait came upon his bull!"

"Ay, ay, Jeremy, we are alike in that particular, so now get the horses and let us take a ride.

Exact to the very hour, I hastened to the convent, and was admitted to the sanctum of the Prior.

"Good, my son, good!" said he, as he saw me enter. Rising from his seat, he advanc'd, and patting me on the back with his hand, of no light weight, added—"There is not a better sign in boyhood, youth, manhood, or old age, than punctuality.—How much of all that's excellent, has been lost by a want of this virtue—a stew is irremediably spoilt by delay.—A roast?—oh, it moves my utmost indignation even to think of it—in short, nothing can stand it, excepting always a boiled plum pudding,—would that I oftener beheld that good old friend! But come, while we are talking here, the boar's head is done to a turn—perhaps even waiting for us!"

This last thought seemed almost to bring tears into his eyes.

"To be brief, then," he resumed, "we have considered

thy case—taken measures for thy convenience;—thou art to become a lay brother of our monastery, and all initiatory steps shall be gone through with thee to-morrow.”

“ For all thou now seest, we have thy honourable promise, have we not?”

“ Most certainly, good father,” said I, not a little taken aback, “ but”—

“ My son, but me no buts—save and except they be butts of Rhenish to the stores of our refectory.—Follow me.”

The worthy Prior advanced to an outer door, the panels of which were highly polished, and surrounded with rich sculpture in wood. Pushing aside a small pilaster that communicated with the lock, the latter turned, and the door readily opening to the sturdy sinews of my friend, we passed into a small room hung round with various robes, well stored with books and manuscripts, lighted with windows of stained glass, and most luxuriously carpeted.

Taking down a dress of crimson silk that hung in loose folds, the Prior inducted him into the same, with wonderful celerity; then seizing me by the shoulders, I quickly found myself somewhat similarly attired.

This done, the Prior opened a casket, and taking out two ruby signet rings, placed one of great value on the forefinger of his own right hand, and a smaller one on mine.

From this room a door stood open, leading down a flight of narrow winding steps, in stone. It was of no great descent; and from the glare of torch-light at the bottom, evidently communicated with some chamber below, whence ascended the low voices of men conversing, and one of the most savoury steams that ever yet delighted mortal nostril.

“ Down! down!” cried the Prior, pointing with his finger. I began to descend.

“ Stay, my son, let me place my hand on thy shoulders, the stairs are steep, thou mayest else hurt thyself.”

Quickly walking me down before him, with very great consideration—for himself—in a few seconds we found ourselves in company with two stout worthies, wearing the same distinctive badges as those we had already assumed.

“ Most learned and sedate brothers,” said the Prior, advancing, and waving his hand towards me with a patronising air of condescension, as he addressed himself to the others, “ you now see before you, Mr. Edward Wortley Montague, a traveller of some parts and divers adventures. After no inconsiderable experience of the world, this gentleman, as is already known to you, my learned brothers, has become

anxious to adopt our doctrines. He has this day been admitted a lay brother of our monastery, and in consideration of his parts, of his being a gentleman of distinguished English family, and also of the noble largess with which it is doubtless his intention to augment the funds of our brotherhood, we have this day admitted him to the rare and unusual privilege of becoming a lay brother also of the Priors of Prague. Edward Wortley Montague," in my turn addressing me, and pointing to his sedate self and brothers—"behold the Priors of Prague, who are renowned wherever—But stay! thou shalt know the rest after supper, for here comes our good Anselmo with the meat—and know in time, that to keep a meal waiting, is moral death; in other words, expulsion from the society.

Quick as light the three Priors were seated—I only wondered how such great bodies could revolve so quickly even in their own orbit; and seemingly, never before were bodies and their orbits so exactly suited to each other.

My seat was between my friend—distinguished, I soon found out, as the Grand Prior—and the second Prior, brother Pierre, who presided. The third Prior, by name Ambrose, sat opposite.

The most marked silence now reigned around, save and except such interruptions as were occasioned by—"Learned Brother, what part do you take?"

"Prior Ambrose, do you esteem the superior or inferior fat?—the upper or the lower side?"

"Sedate Father, shall I give you part of the ear, or the palate?"—and so on.

Having mean while an opportunity of looking around me, I did so. We seemed to be seated in a kind of crypt or vault, which, though not large, was extremely beautiful in its architecture.

The roof was arched; supported by Gothic pillars, divided into six compartments, and exquisitely groined and ornamented in the Gothic style. Six most superb pictures, from the pencil of the soft and beautiful Corregio, adorned the two sides of the vault, and were so disposed that they received, at the nicest angle, a most gorgeous blaze of light from the upper end of the vault.

On turning my head to observe the source of this effulgence, I beheld a tomb of exquisite sculpture; so high as to mingle with the groined arches, and half shaded by a screen of the finest Gothic tracery.

Within this was laid out the stern and colossal effigies of

some deceased warrior. The visor was down, and displayed sharp angular features of uncommon symmetry and commanding air. The helmeted head was cushioned on an open bible, and around the lower part of the form was loosely thrown the cowl'd robe of a monk.

From this, and the fact of the feet resting against a mitre, I concluded that some deceased and warlike abbot, of olden days, lay buried beneath. Be that as it may, the vivid light of numerous concealed lamps poured down over this solemn image, marking out distinctly the most minute lines, and giving in broad, rich contrast the whole splendour of its beams to every other part of the vault.

The effect on the whole was both dazzling and seductive, and the crimson robes showed gaily beside the grave countenance of the Priors, and the dark oak panelling that ran round and supported the basis of the pictures. The chairs in which we sat were old and high, and very magnificently cut; to say nothing of being cushioned so luxuriously, that there seemed no end to the sinking down of the well-stuffed satin.

To our feet equal attention had been paid; along the whole length of the table ran a hollowed mound, containing heated charcoal, the fumes being conducted away by a flue, and the whole covered with the same rich carpeting as the rest of the flooring.

As I finished my survey, I laughed in my sleeve—and it was as large as though it had been made on purpose—and thought, what would the great Frederick say, could he just look in on these worthy Priors. After the many bitter and often prejudiced sarcasms I had heard drop from his lips respecting monks, how would he have been tickled!

Still more would he have been delighted to have pitched a few of his bomb-shells down upon them; but at him and his bombs too, such rogues might well afford to laugh—looking up at the same time to the vaulted roof.

As if he had divined my very thoughts, Prior Pierre looked off from his plate and remarked, “Not to be despised, my child, were quarters such as these, while your bullets were pouring down on our devoted city.”

“Silence, most learned and sedate Brother!” interposed the Grand Prior, and the feast was noiselessly resumed.

The only attendant who waited on us, was one seemingly of a low grade of the order. His habits were of dark chocolate-coloured cloth. On his head, he wore a snow-white

linen cap, with half sleeves of the same material; and instead of the noble ruby signet that graced the right forefinger of each of the sedate dignitaries, his was of smaller size, and but of almadine.

With looks of the utmost wisdom, and most silent step, he bore around to us a salver, that, like all the rest of the service, was of massive gold, and supported goblets of the same precious metal, and flasks of some of the richest wines.

These duly quaffed, the various and numerous dishes were removed and replaced in the same quiet manner. A door opposite the tomb being reserved for the exit and entrance of this mute servitor, and shaded over with crimson curtains, partly removed to prevent their coming in contact with the passing viands.

What farther lay beyond, I could not, however, make out, as some obstacle was interposed. Dish after dish succeeded each other on the table, and away they glided down the cesophagi of the sedate Priors. Never, on my conscience, did I see a probang less needed, or passages more ample or more free!

Like the sea they appeared to receive every thing. It mattered not what the dish might be, salt or fresh, sweet, sour, or oleaginous, their "deep revenge had stomach for them all."

At last, the feast was over—the last dish removed—the long grace pronounced—the short one came before the meal—and the rich wines and still richer sweetmeats placed upon the board. Even the soundless brother Anselmo no longer glided around us.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Which contains some of the reminiscences of the Grand Prior.

“ My son, I fear thou hast supped but indifferently well,” said the Grand Prior, addressing himself to me.

“ Nay, good father, say not so, I beg of thee,” replied I.

“ Ay, but I do—Marry! and I grieve—as much, mind thee, as mortal man can grieve after such a repast—to think that none of our dainties can atone to thee for the lost city of Londinium—the roasts and plenty of Old England.”

“ Nay, but my good father, I rarely eat much.”

“ Not eat!—not eat!—Saint Ursula and all the bony virgins of Cologne defend us—not eat—Accursed man, why didst thou venture here?—Thou shalt eschew thy vile doctrines or be condemned as a dangerous character. For what saith thy great and cruelly misprinted bard; ‘ The man that hath not eating’ misprinted ‘ music,’—‘ in his soul, is firmed for hellish plots,’ and so on.

“ Nay, my good son, thou shalt not so belie thyself—and thou canst not deceive us. It must have been our fare of which thou didst not approve, for we know thou hast a very sufficient skill in playing on art’s first and most sweet instruments—the knife and fork.

“ We knew this of thee, by the way in which thou didst despatch that capon at this morning’s sitting, at the which we also did look on, and thereof pick a bone. But we pardon thee, my son, in respect that thy native shores do indeed hold forth many dishes by which to command the lasting love and affection of her children.

“ In the dead watches of the night, my son, when my eyelids refuse slumber, often do I mourn over the memory of their departed goodness with a grief to which nothing can afford consolation—save the recollection of the attention it was ever my wont to pay them.”

"No wonder then, good father, that you so readily can imagine me to be lamenting their absence. Pray may I ask in what county of England you were born?"

"In none, my son. For even English swords have failed to make Scotland a county, though they have reduced her to a province."

"Scotland! Worthy Father. By thy tongue I should never have guessed thee to have come from Scotland; nor was I aware that the Scotch generally were such able practisers of the gastronomic art."

"Tout, sir! Let me have no more of thy heresies; no scandal of my countrymen; I do and will uphold of them—poor fellows!—that however they may designate their more powerful neighbours belly-gods—there is no nation by whom, sir, the estimable art of eating is more thoroughly practised than by the Scotch—that is, when they can get it—and if Providence has tried them with the poverty as well as the hunger of the fox, she has more than compensated the matter to them by all that animal's sagacity."

"My son—my son!—To say that my fellow patriots of the North have no affection for eating is a groundless reproach. To what quarter of the globe has not the fame of a Scotch breakfast spread? And wilt thou not in justice to them admit, that a day so nobly begun, will be consistently maintained to its close?"

"Let thy memory for an instant wander back over the list of savoury dishes that will for ever redeem the glories of her hospitality from speck or tarnish. Think only of the haggis—that confluence of all that's rich!—This alone secures her a place in the history of nations—as an humble bard of her plains now singeth of it. The chieftain of the pudding race, of how many an immortal descendant can it not boast! While as for drinking, name if thou canst a people, who in a word can drink—so long—so wisely, or—so much?"

"Nay, nay, my son! it must not be in this company, that thou seekest to attack Scotia's fair fame!—So I advise thee quickly to recant."

"Most worthy Prior, it is already done—thou hast convinced me—such a charge shall never be brought against a land that could produce thyself."

"'Tis well, my son, 'tis well, and now having done justice *patris meæ*, I will handsomely acknowledge that England has many a dish in which to glory. For myself, I was

born in the ancient Glasgow,—hast thou ever been fortunate enough to behold it, my son?"

"No, worthy Father, I have not."

"The greater then thy loss! Thou canst in such case form but little idea of my birth-place. The Gorbals—a portion of the city composed of palaces, of such a description as, I may say, thou wilt rarely see in any other part of Europe.—At a tender age, my son, a family reason—into which it is unnecessary now to enter,—induced my father to reside in France, and at his death circumstances arose which ended in my devoting myself to the solemn calling in which I am but a poor, weak, and unworthy servant."

"Nay, worthy Father!—nay!" gently murmured the brother Priors, at this piece of well-timed self-abasement."

"Alas, it is but too true!—still, whatever my demerits, I have in my day met with some confidence from those great in power and renown. Not rarely was I sent on missions of trust and consequence into the British territory, where as in duty bound it was ever my endeavour to mingle a due degree of harmless relaxation with the serious duties of my office.

"For this purpose, my son, I always chose my route with care. My point of landing from the continent I always made at Dover.—Truly does Dorobernium well deserve the place it holds in history!—from the time of the great and commentating Cæsar, even until now.

"I know of no spot, my son, where thou mayest obtain that delicate fish, the smelt, in greater perfection. Here it was always my wont to remain a few days, until the most sensitive of the human organs had recovered that most cruel of illnesses—sea-sickness.

"This being accomplished, my child, a few days farther were of course devoted to proving myself acquainted with the excellence of the spot.

"From Dover it was my immemorial custom to journey slowly on to Canterbury—ah, City of the most beloved antiquity! Dear indeed, to the soul of every true son of mother church! Resting place of the bones of the murdered Beckett! Though now in the hands of heretics, how stirring are the associations connected with thy venerable piles! For here, my son, is found—and what can surpass it?—the celebrated Canterbury brawn! Exquisite dish! which requires nothing but a good digestion to render it the most tempting of all viands!"

"Here, my sedate Brothers, you will easily imagine, I was in duty bound to remain a week at least. From Canterbury—with much regret, I progressed on to Chatham, where with the aid of a little piquant sauce, even the Medway eels are not to be despised; though on these, no serious notice could be bestowed. For these active fish I used generally to prefer those caught in the little river An.

"Ah! that is indeed a gem of rivers! though scarcely larger, sedate Brothers, than the merest rivulet. What ample supplies does it not afford to Andover and other towns and villages which it enriches by its passage! And indeed I found, on my journeys, that Hampshire was in this respect a favoured county.

"Once arrived in London, arduous truly was the task to quit it! How many delicacies there demanded my duties and attention—from the native oyster to the national beef-steak!

"As Ireland was generally the limit of my mission, sometimes I would, if it were the summer season, take the western direction, circulating the coast. At Weymouth, the mullet compelled my love; at Brighthelmstone and thereabouts the dories, though both these delicacies are to be found in still greater excellence fartherwest, beyond the river Exe, at Plymouth, for example. While on my road I always found it to repay my trouble if I took a look at Somersetshire for the gudgeon.

"Neither, at a different season of the year, was the opposite route neglected in my affections. In my day I have yielded due admiration to the lamprey at Worcester. The bubbley jocks of Norfolk still show fair in my remembrance. Yorkshire, with its numerous offerings to the table, can never be forgotten; more especially since it boasts of the delicious and canonical wild-fowl, the ruff; and Cambridge, in the gratitude of the mind's eye—a questionable figure, by the by—shall ever help to crown the repast with her delicious cheeses!

"Of Irish salmon, haddock, and potatoes, what wretched creature shall dare to speak slightingly? And of Scotia's store have I not already reminded thee! Truly"—and here the Prior with a deep sigh crossed his hands over his ample stronghold of good living. "Truly! these be reveries that make one wish the supper was not over!"

A general groan from the three sedate Priors, formed an

assenting chorus to this remark, to which the Grand Prior gave additional force by requesting the assembly to replenish their goblets, and drink a health to merry England, in honour of him who now, for the first time, sat at the privileged supper-table of THE PRIORS OF PRAGUE.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

In which I subscribe to the rule of the Priors of Prague, taste of their cup of solemn adjuration, and hear of a most heart-rending case of the effects of gambling.

"My son," said the Grand Prior, turning to me, as soon as I had duly expressed my gratitude for the honour mentioned in the preceding chapter; "my son, it is fitting that I now renew that description of our learned and sedate order in which I was before interrupted by the entrance of the repast.

"Know then, that into our reverenced body, none can be admitted as members until they have attained the respectable weight and consideration of fifteen stone—or upwards, or of such a size and importance as will well fill up the doorway by which thou enteredst this our sanctum.

"Our brother Ambrose on my left, hath attained to eighteen stone; I, as the Grand Prior, am blessed by kind Dame Nature with twenty-one; brother Pierre, being not of quite so beneficent and amenable a disposition, is somewhat faulty on the weights; but he maketh up in an elevation of stature that will not permit of his entrance into these precincts without stooping. In addition to these precautions, none are admitted of our society, until they have served a long and trying novitiate.

"To be in any way a good Prior, thou must first prove thyself to be an excellent cook,—in order that our society may prove as immortal as aught that belongs to man and earth can be. Know, that it is ever our custom to see that the senior Brother or Grand Prior of our happy society, names an associate,—one who ultimately, at the—ahem!—retirement—natural retirement, you understand me,—of his nominator, succeeds to the vacant robe; and who, until such translation, has the especial duty which thou didst this day see discharged by Brother Anselmo.

"All of us have in turn thus passed *sub jugum*; though this it is doubtless unnecessary to tell thee. How else couldst thou have witnessed such true knowledge paid to the honouring of a feast, had we not previously been rightly skilled in the niceties of preparing it?

"Now, my son, as thou hast also doubtless perceived the chief object of our meetings is to cultivate the pursuit and love of literature: it is well thou shouldst know, that together with those still graver discussions by which the lights of knowledge live; at every meeting a duty devolves in turn upon one of our society, to read aloud, for the edification of the rest, some grave thesis, or otherwise some amusing tale;—always provided, my son, that some true and sufficient moral be couched in the same.

"Now with regard to such temporary brothers of our order as thyself, our laws permit that they may either bear an equal burden with ourselves, or if remaining silent, during their stay with us, they are in honour and conscience bound, as soon after their departure from our society as convenient, to enrich our archives with such history of their lives and adventures as they may see fit to relate.

"For truly, my son, is our order of opinion, that few things are either more amusing or instructive than the misfortunes and follies of our brethren in travail—what sayest thou? Dost thou agree to become amenable?"

"Worthy Prior, I do."

"And wilt thou fairly bear thy burden with the rest? or shall our records be enlivened with a history of thy wanderings?"

"Truly, good father, of my abilities in the imaginative line I would be understood to speak very humbly. Much do I doubt that I could tax my powers in the fictitious department to any extent. Sad, serious, sober truth, believe me, is my forte. From this I must not wander. As soon, therefore, as may be after I am fain to quit thy grave and edifying meetings, trust me, I will send my contributions to thy shelves.

"Not that I say much for my ramblings, neither will I engage to give thee every passage of my life; but simply some slight sketches of my time, that perchance shall not leave thee in temper more dull, or in conduct much worse than it found thee."

"Agreed, my son; and that thou wilt keep all our obser-

vances, thou art ready to pledge us after the fashion of our order?"

"Most ready."

"Brother Pierre, bring hither the solemn cup of adjuration."

Brother Pierre, rising at this command from his superior, unlocked the door of a small recess, which from the profusion of sculpture that adorned it, had escaped my eye.

From this secret repository he first brought forth a most superb golden vase, of the true antique form, displaying on its sides many groups of figures, in high reliefs, and having its edge set round with chrysolites of an unusual size.

This having been carefully placed upon the table, he next drew forth two long-necked bottles, on which the dust and cobwebs of a century seemed to have settled.

With wonderful skill and expedition their contents were decanted into the aureant réceptacle: a clear and sparkling liquid of a light amber colour being shown to the thirsty senses, as the stream was poured.

Having reiterated my pledge, while the three Priors arose and stood around me, I was told to lift the cup and imbibe to the utmost. Having done as I was bid, and taken what I considered an enormous draught, I was about to resign my share in the proceeding, when the Grand Prior perceiving my intention, arrested my arm, crying,

"Drink, that thou may'st be faithful!"

Thus adjured, another mighty portion of the exquisite fluid overflowed its costly brim, and again I essayed to leave off.

"Drink, that thou may'st be wise," interposed brother Pierre. Once more the arduous devoir was performed.

"Drink, dat thou shall be merry!" quoth Father Ambrose: yet another draught I took.

"Drink, that thou may'st be discursive," cried the chief in his turn again.

"But, good Priors—good Fathers."

"Drink, that thou may'st be silent," cried they all in one voice.

Obedient still, I drank, but of quantity I knew nothing more.—The golden vase seemed to glide from my hands.—I remembered nothing of reseating myself, though my first return of recollection found me in my-chair—the drained goblet standing empty and reversed before me, and the pre-

rious Friars chanting a goodly strain, of which the following was a chorus.

“Drink, drink, drink,
Whether on ocean, earth, or air,
In the bowl,
Lies the soul,
Free from sorrow and from care.
The gods at the birth
Of wine on earth
Gave the death-blow to despair.”

“Well I remember, when this Bacchanalian ditty was finished, feeling most exceedingly—I hardly know what to say,—any thing in short but sober. Addressing myself to the chief of the party, I hiccupped out,

“Learned Priors!”—Here I entirely forgot what was to follow, and after a long pause on my part, and the gravest attention on theirs, I began again,

“Learned Priors!” This appeal was, however, equally unsuccessful. In the next I rather changed my note, and began:

“Most sedate Priors! When—when do you begin your literary—eh?”

“Patience, my son, patience,” replied the Grand Prior, “albeit thy mode of speech is none of the clearest, nevertheless, we comprehend thy meaning, and can readily imagine thy deep thirst for knowledge. Know then, our studies never commence till after the seventh cup.” “Seventh cup!” I remember saying, “Seventh cup, merciful Priors! what, more cups! Would that the devil had your cups, I almost suspect they’ve given me the hiccups already, and if that don’t look like a cup too much,—why, I don’t understand cupping, that’s all. Pray, sedate Priors, when will your seventh come on?” “In due time, my son, seeing we shall very soon begin with the first; the preamble thereto being nearly finished.”

“Oh!” groaned I, in horror, morally convinced that my fast-fading ebriety would never outlive seven cups more.

“Most learned and sedate Priors,” said I, “this is very bad! very bad, indeed! I do propose, therefore, to relieve our tedium, as it may be, and, moreover, to keep us sober, —as well as steady—and discreet,—till these said cups arrive, that we take a quiet, gentlemanly, philosophical turn

at the dice; and those who don't like the dice, you know, can take a turn at the cards."

The groan of disapprobation with which my proposal was received, oblivious as I was, I shall not easily forget, for that, together with the lecture and story which followed it, are all that I remember for the rest of the evening.

"Sare, Sare, Sare!" quoth Brother Ambrose, from over the way, "that is a vere, vere bad proposition of your own. De gambling is de horrid vice? When I was de gamble, I myself was a child,—we play at de game you call in England, de pit and toss, with the leetle round button metallique. First, I was lose one button, den anoder, till at last all my stock was gone. What, think you, I did? Ah de child of mischief! I cut off de button of my trousare. First I cut off de button of de pocket, den of de knee, den of de jambe;—Ah, me! den I come on to the vaist, first one button, den de second, den de thaerd, de fourth, and so on till *de temps en temps* I cut off de vere last, and when I went, *chez moi*, to my mamma,—Ah! how do you think? She take away my hands from around my vaist, and down fell my *leetle* breeches all to my heel!"

BOOK THE EIGHTH.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Shows how my curiosity, getting the better of my prudence, induced me to supplant the Grand Prior.

AFTER the severe and appalling lesson on the evils of gambling, contained in the last chapter, it will be readily imagined that I never again ventured to aim at the purses of the sedate and learned Priors.

Our meetings, however, continued with equal spirit and instruction, to take place once a week, and with regard to their influence on my mind, beyond the fact of their invariably producing a severe headach on the ensuing day, I really cannot remember them to have bequeathed to me any greater benefit.

As under this tutelage, it would, indeed, have been strange, if I had not been able to learn something, so I must not forget to add, that I soon learnt to carry three or four bottles very discreetly. Indeed, I may say, that the Grand Prior was actuated by the sincerest wish to render me a most perfect pupil in this respect, since he not only paid the greatest attention to enjoining a strong example at our sedate and learned meetings, but moreover honoured me with his comfortable precepts and society daily at the given hour, when he knew my dinner to be ready.

With respect to those scruples of conscience, touching which I had first desired the benefit of his sage advice, I never could find him disposed "to enter lightly,"—his invariable phrase, "into matters of such deep cast."

If driven beyond this point, he would occasionally add, "Besides, my son, I marvel that a mind so acute as thine, should require farther conviction than thou hast already re-

ceived—touching the great superiority of the comfortable creed we profess."

Unwilling to distress the ~~dear~~ Father, I soon ceased to reiterate these demands, and trusted to my own feelings to decide on the matter in question. Notwithstanding, then, that the Priors had not adduced such abstruse reasons as I conceived they might possess, I determined, like honest Donald of Spanish remembrance, to "become a convict to the Romans."

Having communicated my resolution to the Grand Prior, he tried very hard to induce me to become a permanent brother of his monastery. To this there were many obstacles, though I told him that I would see what and how far these could be removed, provided that he would allow me once or twice to fulfil his duties as confessor to the nuns of the neighbouring convent.

So great was the horror of the worthy Prior at this proposal, and so infinite his surprise at my audacity in making it, that the inclination to attain my point increased ten-fold.

Surely, thought I, there must be something very agreeable in the said office, that my sedate friend is so unwilling to yield it for the briefest space. Numerous thoughts and suspicions came across me, and from the many refusals on his part, my curiosity rose to such a pitch, and so completely got the better of my prudence, that I determined to gain by stratagem that which was denied to entreaty.

For this purpose Jeremy and myself laid our heads together, and the result was the trick I am about to relate. Having prepared the necessary dress by the time that the worthy father came on the ensuing day to take his usual morsel—or as he modestly phrased it, "to look after my health,"—he found me at the table, surrounded with a profusion of lights, but that of day carefully excluded.

On demanding with surprise my motive, I informed him that this was the anniversary of a day on which I had committed a very great piece of folly—though this, by the by, would have been true enough on any day in the year,—and that I had resolved thenceforth through life to keep it as a day of fast and sorrow.

The Prior stroked his goodly sides on this, and sighed most heavily.

"My son, my son, much do I grieve for thy deep humiliation! though doubtless thou art right; and albeit, I do not

myself prescribe such severe remedies, nevertheless, I cannot say that I do not in some sort commend thee. Thine honest knave there, methinks, might have kept this fast for thee, and yet thou have been equally the better for it."

"Nay, my good father, it is a duty the pleasure of which I cannot delegate."

"Marry, my son, but thou hast a dainty notion of pleasure, and a mighty pleasant notion of duty, and beside such as thou, I am fain to confess myself a less abstinent self-denier; and since thou wilt perforce enjoy the pleasure of fasting, thy knave and I will endeavour to support the mortification of eating thy share and our own too. For remember, thy fare may not be neglected—that were a shame and a sin both."

"Right! good Father! such was the very line of reasoning I was about to suggest to thee, but thy powers of the head allow few to anticipate thee, whether it be in the masticative or merely ratiocinative process."

To this the Prior, as was his wont, made no reply, being already engaged in those solemn rites with which nothing was allowed to interfere.

The sedate Father having been as good as his word in performing my share of these duties as well as his own, Jeremy and myself took care to ply him most plentifully with the juice of the grape, and as, from the fact of the light being shut out, he had little opportunity of measuring the lapse of the day, I contrived, when the hour arrived, to slip out on some pretence, leaving him in such a condition as would have puzzled him much to follow.

Arraying myself in the robes I had ready, I made my way without farther ado to the convent, took my seat in the confessional, and on the Lady Abbess presenting herself, made bold to inform her, that the Prior not being so well as he could wish, had been unable to perform his duties, otherwise than in the person of one in whom he had,—though I ought not to say it,—the very greatest confidence.

After a little hesitation, the good woman demanded what might be the matter with her respected pastor. With all the assurance in the world, and perhaps more truth than I was aware of, I replied that there was too much reason to fear an attack of gout in the stomach.

After the sighs and *salves* this information necessarily called forth, the old lady betook herself to a due account of her transgressions. At every drawling word, I listened most

attentively; for sure was I, that something curious was coming.

First came the sins of omission. This penance she had omitted—that only partly performed. Such a vigil had been postponed, such a fast had been broken, while at another she had overslept herself, and missed the better portion of the matin service.

"Come," thought I, "it is not from the sins of omission, but commission, that I must expect to hear any thing that may throw a light upon the proceedings of the sisterhood;—how warily too, the old dame approaches them! I wonder when she'll begin!"

At last they came,—how was my expectation heated, when, after all this preparation, she began by telling me how she had committed an excess that day,—now then, it's coming,—a pretty affair, no doubt,—"an excess!" she said, yes, an excess!—by—"eating too much for breakfast!"

"O dear!" thought I, "here's a case for the Prior. Telling her to get over this as quickly as might be allowed, I begged her to proceed with the next item on her catalogue.

She did so, and this consisted in her loss of temper, and the atrocious fact of her having pinched Sister Agatha on the ear, for presuming to break a penance of two hours' silence, by a sneeze.

From this she went on with great contrition to acknowledge that she had been sadly idle over a golden petticoat, which for some time she had been very busily employed in working for some of the numerous family of saints.—After the petticoat matter, followed a whole list of like enormities, which put me into such a disdainful rage, that I fairly went off into a nap, and awoke by good luck, just at the conclusion of the old soul's drone, without her ever having been any the wiser.

To the abbess succeeded two of the elder sisters of the convent, whose ridiculous absurdities moved my indignation still more greatly than those of their superior.—I am rightly punished for my curiosity, thought I, and beyond the opportunity of increasing one's observation, there is nothing to repay me.

Certainly for one anxious to put the papist creed to the test, no position could be better than mine, and short as was the time passed in that confessional, it had sufficed to raise considerable doubts in my mind, as to whether the new creed I had adopted, was, on the whole, superior to that I had re-

signed. For my own part I most strictly condemn that arrogant bigotry, which presumes idly to censure the doctrines of another; yet simply in my own case, it did appear to me, rather questionable, that rational creatures should thus pass their lives, and yet esteem it an acceptable sacrifice at the hand of infinite power and purity, and at the same time require as their mediator for the sin of all this nonentity, a man like my friend the Grand Prior.

Still I reflected with shame, that a life passed even thus, was infinitely better than one devoted to follies such as mine.

In the case of the last penitent, however, there was not only something much more to interest me, but an additional proof of the error of the conventional system.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

How I met with a case imperatively demanding my assistance.

Come, thought I, as these good old folks doled forth their nothingnesses into my ear, I'll not be caught in the confessional again in a hurry. But who comes here; this young dame must surely have another tale to tell.

As I said this, there seated herself in the chair a fine commanding figure of a woman. On throwing back the hood that concealed her features, I beheld with considerable emotion, the face of a young creature who could scarcely have numbered eighteen summers.

Her complexion was of the fairest hue that it is possible to conceive, and by the expression of deep melancholy in her large, liquid eye, the beholder was led to believe that when in full health and spirits, the rose might show upon her cheek in equal power with the lily.

A profusion of golden hair seemed longing to disport itself on her full, fair bust, and was cruelly confined by a simple tie of light blue riband, while the Roman nose and full red lip all combined to bespeak her one of those German beauties, of which, as you rarely see a perfect specimen, you are the more enchanted with it.

Wondrously fair penitent! thought I, confessing Father as I am, I feel already an infinity of compassion for thee.—But so—thou art about to speak—I'm all attention. The first sweets accents fell from those ruby lips, and I caught but the sound, for the speaker's timidity had retained the sense of them.

“Gentle daughter,” said I, deepening my voice to the true Friar-pitch; “Gentle daughter, take courage—to so grave and venerable a father as myself thou mayest indeed disburden thy overloaded conscience, for truly what is expected of us?—What farther touch or taint of earth have we, except the human form—weaned from its carnalities—cold as the marble to its follies—only the compassionating charities of life, child, warm us to existence.”

“Oh, I warrant me,” she cried, “in her own mind, A true prior! A true prior!”—Strengthened, however, in her resolution by my stoical discourse, she began.

After two or three little peccadilloes, she came to the more considerable one of having nursed wishes to escape from what she termed her present confinement. This at once led me to inquire her motive, and the communication of her history was the result.

Her father was one of the most considerable nobles of the Holy Empire. Having projected "in her favour" a marriage unexceptionable in point of the great wealth and greater age of her intended husband, she with a filial anxiety to render her father's views the more desirable, by throwing some little impediment in their way, had taken a favourable opportunity of uniting herself beforehand to her own cousin.

This latter gentleman happened by no means to rival his fellow candidate in any point, save that unimportant one, the lady's affection, being nothing near so well off in the world's possessions, or, consequently, in his uncle's good opinion.

With a considerable bribe of jewels, she had brought over a good catholic to perform the ceremony of the marriage.—As a part, but the last part of which, he very unfortunately considered it his duty to inform the father—always taking care that this part of the ceremony paid him even better than the first.

Our noble of the Holy Empire, on hearing how dutifully his nephew and daughter had proceeded, naturally wished, in his tender-hearted consideration for their happiness, to spare them till the latest moment.

On the instant after the marriage, the bridegroom—the better to avoid suspicion—had hastened on a hunting excursion for the day. Having been closely watched till the mid-hour of night, he was arrested in the very moment of hastening to his lady's bower.

In the mean time the blushing bride, with palpitating heart was expecting the arrival of her lord. Her damsel—and of course her confidant—was busily engaged in the tender offices of hand-maiden, as they sat over the log fire in an antiquated room of her parent's castle.

A gentle tap came at the door.—Slow to render up their dear authority, the lover was told for the last time to "wait."—The final arrangements completed, the confidant prepared to retire.

Having opened the door for the impatient bridegroom to enter, she gave a faint shriek.—Her mistress summoned courage to look out upon the scene, and then beheld advancing—her spouse? No, only her father!

After the little necessities of fainting, hysterics, and so on, the disconsolate was informed that her better half was already under a kind escort, on his road to join the army in Silesia. The third evening from thence found herself and match-making progenitor safely arrived within the city of Prague.

Having been forthwith placed in the convent, in which I found my confessional services required, her lover had in the interim found means of proving himself true of heart.

Holding in due contempt all fathers, uncles, and those sort of people, he had contrived to get into Switzerland, and having found out the cage of his darling, wrote from thence, by a sure hand, to know in what way he should achieve her delivery.

Come, thought I, this case must have been intended for me—I should never forgive myself, were I to let slip so apposite an adventure.—Prague is, I confess, a very delightful city, but it is time I shifted my quarters, and where can I meet so pleasant a *compagnon de voyage*?—Think, too, of the gratitude of her husband for all my exertions!

Gratitude of husbands!—Ahem!—At this moment I recalled the strong evidence of that feeling in Mr. C.—

The very thought of him, in such a juncture, forced me, despite myself, to —take a pinch of snuff.

“Well, my dear,” said I—“that is, my child!” quickly and duly correcting this excess of canonical warmth, do you consider your marriage in every respect binding?”

She quickly replied in a strong affirmative. I then demanded if dependence could be placed upon her, in case any friend could be found to assist in restoring my lady to her husband. The most unbounded professions were made in return to this; and telling her to moderate these till the time came for proving them, I said that I myself was about to leave the good city in which we then were; that I was too good a Catholic to assist an unjust father in separating those whom venerable mother church had joined, and that if she would consider herself safe under my guidance, I would see how her release could be effected.

Full of gratitude and astonishment, hope, fears, tears, and so on, my fair German departed. She was the last of my penitents, and I therefore quickly followed her example,—greatly consoled by thinking that this last case had made up for those that preceded it, and that I had at least done some good in my new vocation.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Shows how my assistance in the imperative case terminated in the subjunctive mood.

“JEREMY,” said I, we leave Prague to-morrow.—Passports, plagues, brothers of every description, are arranged; and I am happy to tell you I’m in a very fair way of getting into as neat a scrape as ever marked the gentleman.”

“Beg, then, to congratulate your worship. Who, then, may I ask, is the lady?”

“Lady, you rascal!—Think you that I cannot get into a scrape without a lady’s assistance?”

“Clearly not, your worship. The worst of matters is no scrape till that enchanting robe the petticoat’s slipped over them. Rows of all other descriptions men have sense enough to dislike—but these, your worship!—somehow or other man has a natural affection for them.

“As for yourself, respected sir, judging from what I’ve seen for some years past, whip me if I think your honour has affection for any thing else *than* a petticoat, unless indeed it be—two of them.”

“Jeremy, you wrong me; I once met a vagabond in the streets, who picked my pocket, and somehow or other I was fool enough to take an affection to him.”

“Fair hit that, sir; but I dare say he did quite as bad. As you say, he was only practising the vagabond’s art, and, as I hear, took you for his master.”

“Come, thou incorrigible knave, teach thy tongue manners, or I will inevitably get the Grand Prior to pass his probang upon thee.”

“Oh, your worship, I’m mute—mute—mute!”

“Thou hast some sense, then, as he of the ‘inimitable weapon’ says. By some odd chance, too, thou hast managed to stumble on the truth in asserting there is a lady in the present affair.—A lady wishing to go in search of her lover, consents to take me for her guide.”

“Very bad!—very bad indeed, sir!—A lover wanting?—She need never wander far for that in your worship’s society.”

“Nay, but thou knave in buckram, ‘tis her husband.”

“Worse again, sir!—’Tis very plain that they can’t have been long married, for women now-a-days have nothing but lovers and husbands.—I really am surprised they’re not more discreet.”

“Why, you don’t mean to blame all of them, do you?”

“All, sir!—all alike!”

“Come, come, Master Jeremy, don’t presume to throw even a shadow of blame on the sex in my hearing—if you have any affection for this life.—I feel convinced there are hundreds—nay, on my honour, thousands—ay, even millions—of women, most discreet,—if discreet means inaccessible to love—most discreet indeed!”

“Do you really, sir.—Who are they?”

“Why, even this very lady in debate, would have repulsed her adorer with scorn—absolutely with contempt—at eighty, or eighty-five.”

“Ha, ha, ha!—more than probable, your worship.”

“Probable, you knave!—I tell thee ‘tis a fact—or, at the utmost, say ninety—that’s a good sober age.”

“Hey there, within, you Jeronimo!—you Jeremy—you rascal with a master fifty times worse than yourself!—Let me in there—undo the door there, I say,—or I will incontinently undo the covering of thy pate in more places than one—interrupt the continuity of surface—produce effusion of thy sanguineous fluid, and otherwise greatly damnify thee.”

As these last threatening words were uttered, Jeremy quickly undid the door which some awkward wight was labouring to unfasten, and in rolled the Grand Prior, blowing at such an awful rate as might have set a church organ playing without even touching the keys.

“A precious walk!—a walk without an equal, but not an unparalleled walk—for ‘twas a walk in a straight line, and my shadow walked it over the way!—Truly a forced march, as valiant troops term running away. If they don’t march they’re sure to be forced, and if they’re not forced they never will march it—and all for thee!—All for thee, Signor Wortley!—A pretty precious lay brother, thou, of our sedate and learned order!—Never was man worse served than I by thee!

"I told thee, last morning, that thy confessing trick was a trick too bad for any confessing to absolve thee, to say nothing of thy immoral conduct, in pretending to believe that I—albeit an humble son of mother church—was at the same time vinosus, as the Latins have it, or as the vulgar infamously translate it—groggy. Shameful was the supposition, my lay brother—for even supposing that the wine flagon had made a little free with me, dost thou not know that it adds a perfume to the lip, of exquisite delicacy? And whereas the tender dames that I confess, being unable, from their great modesty, more freely to indulge in the generous liquor, are far from disapproving of this primitive anointment."

"Ay, truly devout father, but I wonder greatly at thy lips having aught to do with these tender dames. I fear me, I did not rightly perform my office. I only turned an attentive ear to them, whereas it seems"—

"Ahem, my worthy son!—the tongue thou knowest is an unruly member, and the lips I fear have suffered from bad society; or otherwise I know not how rightly to account for their frequent approach to ladies' noses—though truly they have a great—and, I may say—from all I hear,—a very natural tendency to slip round in that direction.

"But to quit such light topics for the mission that brought me hither. My son, this night must see thee far from Prague. Great and imminent are the dangers that beset thy unmindful sconce in this good city!"

"Wherefore, father?"

"Canst thou ask that, when, no later than the day before yesterday, thou didst try to seduce out of our safe keeping a German lady of illustrious birth?"

"How knowest thou that, good father?"

"Know I not the matter, truly unworthy son? Let this then suffice thee,—when thou didst steal away my name and character, robes and office, as it were, thou didst but half do the business—thou couldst not steal away my knowledge."

"No, truly reverend Prior," answered Jeremy; "hard would it be to take that whick we cannot find, *ex nihil nihil fit*, as the Latin hath it."

"Out, thou audacious varlet!—Dost think priors are double-winded, to talk two ways at once?—and never so much as a flask of Canary, or even a bottle of Rhenish, to supply the extra eloquence withal? Hast thou ne'er another capon

lying cold upon the larder's shelf?—I warrant me thou hast!—Stir thyself then briskly!—Laziness is the root of all evil, knave; and thy master must needs be hungry—not to say that this must be the last meal I shall ever have the satisfaction to bless for his eating.”

“ Ay truly, reverend Prior!—what a deal of concern my master's eating does give thee—'tis a pity you can't consent to take a little bit yourself, worthy Prior.”

“ Now, if I baton thee not into some show of decency, Master Jeronimo,” quoth the burly priest, snatching at a cane—But ere he had risen from his seat, Jeremy had vanished down the stairs.

“ 'Tis a humoursome creature, after all,” resumed he, turning round to me; “ but, as I was about to tell thee, when thou didst take the robe, thou didst not carry with thee the wits of a confessor.—Know, my son, that our chair of recital is so placed, that the slightest whisper is carried by the echo of the walls to the small door on the left.* Thou wilt not mention this again—it concerneth Mother Church's character, of which, as a good son, I know thou wilt be careful. Thither, seeing thou wert an unknown character,—thither did repair our Lady Abbess, to whom only besides myself the secret is known. Thither after her own confession, I say, did our worthy Lady Abbess repair.—Do'st take, my son? Thy enormities are known.”

“ Confusion, I say, shake the old hag to tatters! What then has become of the lady?” cried I, starting to my feet.

“ Sit thee down, my son, and be not disquieted; the damsel is by this time safe in the castle of her fathers—where, rebellious though she be, no harm will chance to her;—and for thee, as I said before, thou must depart incontinently, or thy life may become less secure than the sedate and learned society of the Priors of Prague could wish for a lay brother. But these be slight matters—and here comes Jeronimo with the capon.”

* Somewhere it has happened even to us, to know or hear of a case similar to that above recorded. Much do we grieve that we cannot exactly charge ourselves as to where or from whom the fact reached us, unless indeed from one ever most esteemed and dear to us—Henry Dundas Morrison—noble of heart, fertile of fancy, and of most racy wit!—PRIORS OF PRAGUE.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Shows how I left Prague, and how another opportunity of reformation was postponed *sine die!*

LIGHT a matter as the learned Prior deemed the shortening of my span to be, it was still a point worthy in my eye of a difference of opinion. Finding that I was unable to help the lady in distress, as kindly as I had intended, I thought it better in such an extremity to help myself,

In this line, it was once my opinion that I had great natural abilities. Taking a hasty leave of my friends, and promising the sedate Priors one day to enrich their records with these grave histories, Jeremy and I once more shook the dust from our feet, and recommenced our rambles.

By no means distressing ourselves as to time, we at length arrived at Naples. Having been, I must confess it, exceedingly disappointed at the little congeniality evinced by my peculiar disposition for the tenets of the Roman church, I had mentally turned a wistful eye more than once towards England.

Though I am but too well aware that I have but little cause to flatter myself on my virtues, still I must not be so unjust as to say that I looked forward with pleasure to the death of a parent, from whom, however greatly we might differ in feeling, I had ever received the greatest kindness.

Still it is a law of nature, that we must outlive our progenitors; and the most delicate mind cannot at all times refrain from contemplating what its position may be at a future day.

With me, this had so far been the case, that I had always looked to the inheritance of my father's immense fortune, as a sure means of extricating me from many of my present dilemmas in the debt line; and, with the fatal exception of my marriage, enable me to commence the world afresh.

These having long been my feelings, I was hardly pre-

pared for the news which reached me in Italy. There learnt I the death of my father, and the fact of his will, of many years' standing, having left me simply a thousand pounds a year during my life and Lady Mary's, and at her death, to be doubled.

To attempt any description of my feelings at this would be vain,—the whole dreams and projects of my existence were at once struck down. In the worst and most unfortunate eras of my life I had always depended on this one rallying point, as that which no evil chance could assail,—a strong hold that never could be taken, even by the connivance of any folly of my own.

And this—this last and seemingly impregnable hold—had fallen. The foundation of all my future plans had given way,—their superstructure lay in ruins around me. With what intense hatred did I not view those near relatives whom I now conceived to have come between me and my inheritance,—and yet they were safe beyond my reach.

No act of mine could touch them. Yes, there was yet one possibility which would put them once more in my power, and I resolved firmly—steadfastly resolved—that I would put it to the issue, should a favourable opportunity ever arise.

By a clause in my father's will, he had secured a fund, by which I was enabled to settle eight hundred a year for life on any woman I might hereafter marry, should an opportunity of a second marriage be afforded me; while to any child of such marriage there was left a splendid estate in Yorkshire, that was otherwise to go to the second son of my sister, the Countess of Bute.

It was not likely that my second marriage could ever arise. For years I had heard nothing of my wife, beyond the fact, that she continued to live in Devonshire, and never forgot, by any lucky accident, to draw her maintenance. But, oh! thought I,—if it should please the Fates to take her!—if by any chance an opportunity should be afforded me of showing what my feelings are, to those who have my birthright,* will I not take advantage of it to the utmost?

* Angrily as worthy Mr. Montague speaks of the Bute family, it was the general impression of the day that his sister had behaved very handsomely to him, and we mention it in common justice, for however pardonable and natural the ebullitions of disappointment, they are of so unsavoury a nature as only to be eaten with salt—*cum grano salis*, as the learned say.—PRIORS OF PRAGUE.

So completely were all my views, feelings, and intentions upset by this reverse, that for some time I knew not what to do. As a last resource, I took to science,—wrote two letters, which were afterwards read before the Royal Society,—and having gone to see the tomb of the beloved but unfortunate Frances, and loitered away another year in Italy, I was surprised one morning by a packet, containing the news of my mother's demise, and the handsome sum of one guinea bequeathed to me by her will,—though doubtless at the same time she considered this too much, only that she couldn't decently leave me less, and it's as well to study the decencies of life on going out of the world, though one has never done so before.

"Jeremy," said I, tossing the gold over to him; "there's all my mother's will is worth to me,—take it; spend it merrily, and think it is not every master who would thus have bestowed on thee all the property his mother left him."

"Right, your worship!" said he, looking at the gold with curious eye,—"when she left you such a property, I should think she meant it to be personal, and not real property."

"Be that as it may, Jeremy, make you the most of it; though, on second thoughts, I am sorry the old lady's gone away bad friends with me; but in this world a man might almost sooner tell who is his father than his friend."

"Right again, your honour! right!"—pocketing the cash with a most lachrymose air—" 'tis a sorrowful world at the best, so let us take it as we find it!—We did not make it, that's clear—just about as clear is it, that we can't mend it!—pray therefore, your worship, do grin and bear it! Depend upon it you will soon have done with it; and consider that, at any rate, there is this consolation left us,—that we leave it pretty much the same as we found it—for the next comers."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Shows how I recommenced my travels.

THAT Jeremy, surnamed the Honest, was a true philosopher, no one, I think, can doubt who has read the last chapter, with that degree of edification, which it was evidently written to produce. The pith of the doctrine therein so beautifully insinuated, amounts to this—take all things coolly, even though it may be the taking of a purse;—one thing excepted by the by—warm brandy and water,—and the hotter you take that the better.

As I had no other point on which to reflect with pleasure in the present dilemmatum—I hope you'll like that word or make a better—state of my affairs, I determined not to give another thought to the splendid fortune I had lost, but simply to repeat to myself, six times a day, “My income's doubled—think of that!”

Two thousand a year was nothing very grand for a man who, during many years, had been in the habit of expecting something much nearer sixty. Still it was but to alter the style of living, to be content to feed a few less sycophants and slanderers,—and all the luxuries and enjoyments of life remained the same.

For me, I inherited my father's capabilities, who for some time, by way of experiment, lived on a guinea a week, and a very fair allowance too, when a man can get no more. However, in the middle of my resignation, there was one subject that gave me the greatest grief—caused me a deal of anguish—and of far too poignant a character to be in the least relieved by the very best or deepest philosophy.

My creditors! my unhappy creditors!—Not one of the twelve tribes of Israel but mourned—some part of them at least—the sad reverse my fortunes had sustained!—Oh, I'll be bound when they thought of me, and took their lonely

way to Doctors' Commons, they salted their beards to the tune of his gold!

Poor old Moshes!—in the silence and the solitude of the night, his reproachful countenance would arise beside me, covered with roguery and gray hairs, and aid the pleading of his long withered bony hands to ask—

“ Where vash his money?”

“ Oh, Moshes! my dear fellow, I really cannot say; you must ask my father the first time you meet him. It was very wrong in him to overlook such claims as yours,—but, on my honour, the fault is not mine. I positively would have helped it—if I could.”

Thus powerfully adjured, the shades of Moshes incontinently plucked his beard and went upon his way, whereat, with a merry laugh, I would awake—heartily convinced that the disappointment of losing my fortune was more than compensated by the joy of “ *doing* ” the Jews.

Being at this time seized with a nervous attack, the result of mental excitement, I was, after a long period spent in various remedies, induced to put myself under a course of treatment recommended by a Neapolitan physician—that of slight doses of opium whenever the fit came on; and more than every thing else, change of scene. I asked him if taking the office of scene-shifter at the opera would do. With all the gravity in the world, he said he thought not quite—but I might try.

Declining, under such circumstances, to make the experiment, I embarked with Jeremy, at Naples, for Messina,—resolving to put in practice a wish I had long entertained, of paying a visit to the Knights of Malta.

Having arrived in those renowned straits, once so formidable to sea-farers, we looked in vain for the awful whirl-pools. Floating on a sea as smooth as glass, the very lightest zephyr that could disturb a calm, took us into the beautiful harbour of Messina.

We spent a few weeks most delightfully at this port; for here is every enjoyment on earth, without a single drawback—except the earthquakes, which lay the town in ruins once or twice a month;—so that travellers, wishing to enjoy themselves, should make a point of coming in the intervals.

We were very fortunate. During the four weeks that we were there, only three slight shocks occurred; in one of

these, the front of our hotel fell out into the street, it is true; but that only concerned the passengers below, for the back and sides standing firm, we were not much disturbed.

However, the city of Messina is certainly very fine, if only from the beautiful ruins which meet you on every side, and I make no doubt that here the unfortunate might resort to live with equal economy and delight,—if they shouldn't happen by any accident to get killed beforehand.

The Sicilian women appeared to me to be remarkably pretty, and most fascinating in their manners. I think I might have taken up a more permanent residence at this city, but for the change of scene, and some slight impression on my mind, that by doing so not only might the scene be changed, but the green curtain dropped—and if this were all that had to be accomplished, I need never surely have troubled myself to leave the side of my physician.

Sailing from Messina, we touched at Catania, and again at Syracuse, and then stretched over from Cape Passaro to Malta.

It was about ten o'clock, when we took our departure from the last point of Sicilian land; a beautiful breeze attended us on our passage, and as near as might be to the hour of six, our bark dropped anchor before Fort St. Elmo.

In the course of my varied ramblings, it has been my lot to see a number of spots well calculated from appearance and history to make a deep impression on the mind, but I do not think that any association has more completely produced this effect on me than the celebrated fortresses by which I was now surrounded.

Nature and art seemed to have gone hand in hand, with happy rivalry, in throwing together these most impregnable citadels, while the calm azure sea that reflected their frowning heights in its scarcely ruffled bosom, afforded at once the most admirable contrast, and the most perfect mirror.

The sun was as yet some way from setting, while the full rich moon attempted to contend with its light, throwing the least perceptible radiance upon the water, and growing less and less "pale with envy," as every succeeding minute contributed to sink her rival in the deep.

At length his glorious brow had fairly sunk beneath the wave. Oh, how beautiful, how matchlessly beautiful did the scene then appear. The bold frowning heights around, seemed already to have soared higher into the deep blue

ether, while all the blackness of night had descended upon the waters, that slept unruffled at their base—save here and there where a gondola-shaped boat cut its way along, leaving a train of fire behind it to amuse the eye, and a deep swell of song from its boatmen to engage the ear.

How quickly and how sadly came rushing on the bosom the memories of the past! The grave nor held its victims nor the deep its dead. The friends and the familiars of past years surrounded me, while the heart overflowed with forms that could no longer fill the arms. How strange, how deep, how exquisite, and yet how melancholy are such feelings,—language can no more describe them when past, than our senses can explain them when present.

CHAPTER XL.

Shows how to cure the nervous.

FORTUNATELY for Jeremy and myself, at the time of our arrival at Malta, no quarantine was necessary for vessels coming from Sicily. On the ensuing day, therefore, we repaired on shore, and took up a very comfortable billet in the north-eastern quarter of the city of Valetta, which overlooked one of the harbours commanded by the old and beautiful Fort Manuel.

For the first few days we needed nothing more than our sense of seeing to delight us. Every thing around wore the air of novelty, and yet nothing appeared strange. Our feelings were such as would result from the first meeting of two friends who had long been correspondents and familiar with each other from description.

We were at once connected with one of the most brilliant eras of past history, by a single link, and every step we took was on an arid soil, which the very spirit and soul of chivalry had fertilized and consecrated as its own.

After a few days, when our own feelings began to grow monotonous, I sought out the Auberge de Provence, and there made myself known to a French knight, with whose elder brother I had formerly been intimate at Paris. Having received me with all the warmth and politeness of his country, he gave me a very cordial invitation to spend some time at a little retreat belonging to him, not very far distant from the city.

Accepting the invitation in the same spirit in which it was given, we drove out, together with Jeremy, on the ensuing day, and I found every reason to applaud the good taste of my new acquaintance, except in one particular, of which more anon.

Among other appointments of the worthy bachelor's household, was that of the lady who presided over it. As my host introduced us, he mentioned the fact of her being a near relation, though he forgot to state in what exact degree of propinquity they stood towards each other—or it might have been my deafness, and I did not hear,—or my dulness, and I did not understand.

However, there she was. I concluded, at once, that her office was to keep away the thieves. In truth, she was ugly enough to have frightened the most daring of mankind.

In Malta, premature old age comes on alike on all classes of the natives, but especially the females—womanhood at twelve years of age, and old age at five and twenty.

As ugliness is no crime, and in truth, after all, is a mere diversity of opinion, I never allow this to set me against any one if I can help it, so at first was as civil to my host's cousin as the circumstances of the case seemed to demand.

I had not, however, been at this villa a week when my nervous complaint increased to a degree that became most irksome; as it constantly filled me with alarm when no other earthly being could see any cause for apprehension.

Reflecting since on the site of the building and grounds, I am convinced that it was partly the result of malaria. Never having at that time observed the influence of this poisonous air on some constitutions, I attributed the increase of my complaint to other causes, and should, most likely, have only exchanged my then location for one of a more permanent nature, but for a remedy of a most extraordinary kind which was forced upon me with a view to any end but the one it effected.

CHAPTER XLI.

Which stands as curate to the last, and performs in reality that which the other only professed to do.

As few men when ill have any particular aversion to becoming an object of attention to the softer sex, so I, during the prevalence of my nervous fit, had insensibly glided into all the imperiousness of the invalid, and saw without emotion—nay even without thought—this ugly phantom of a woman hovering about me and put to numberless troubles on my account.

How such a mistake came to arise I know not, but it is a sober serious fact, that the good soul formed the very strongest notion that she, and she alone, was utterly indispensable to my happiness—and that if I did not know this for myself she knew it for me.

Now this good damsel had a tiring maid—one deep in all her mistress's councils, and almost—though this would have been difficult—as ill-looking as herself.

This sweet soul—a very proper medium for messages of love from such a principal—took Jeremy aside one morning, and told him that she had a very delicate affair to intrust to his guidance.

Jeremy at once assured her that she had in this instance come to the right person, for that guiding delicate affairs was his peculiar forte.

Thus encouraged, she informed him that she was commissioned by her mistress to commission him to inform me—that the first party was exceedingly rich and still more affectionate—that she had perceived how necessary she was to my happiness,—and that after a long struggle she had determined to honour me with her fortune and her hand,—and that I had only to woo in order at once to win her for my wife.

When Jeremy communicated to me this proposal in my favour, I laughed aloud—as who would not,—while to mirth succeeded no slight degree of anger, that such an object should presume to select an unfortunate, disinherited, nervous, and elderly gentleman on whom to play her pranks.

As however I most clearly agreed with Jeremy, that it was a delicate business, I determined not to wound the sensitive mind of the lady who thus honoured me, and so sent back word, through Jeremy, that nothing would have given me greater pleasure, but very unfortunately there happened to be some little obstacle in the way, for that I was married already.

At the same time thinking it was a pity that all this wealth should go out of the family, as it were, I advised Jeremy to make up to her on his own score.

Whether my last hint was either unpalatable or impracticable I know not, but the worthy go-between returned on the ensuing day to tell me that the dame had greatly resented my having a wife—as she very strongly suspected—solely for the occasion. In order to try, therefore, whether this had been a fact or only an excuse, she sent back word, that since I was already tied, she would dispense with any repetition of the ceremony as far as related to herself, though this very fact of my being married, added, she conceived, still greater room as it were for the granting the present request, that in our future wanderings we would accept of her Platonic regards and society.

I at once replied, that for her Platonic regards we would accept them and be thankful, but that with regard to her society we could not avail ourselves of that to the extent we wished, since my wife was an odd woman and might take offence, to say nothing of what might be thought by the lady's relative—our host.

The only reply made to these cogent reasons was a very significant motion from the servant, alluding to the stiletto, and a strong hint that the sooner we cleared the coast the better.

Regarding this as mere malice of the moment, I laughed at the revenge indicated, and seemingly was right in doing so.

Though thus important had been the communications passing between the subordinates, not the most distant hint at any thing of the sort could have been gathered from the demeanour of the principals; and when on the ensuing day

I met the dark and aged patroniser of Plato's tenets, it was impossible to gather from her carriage or deportment in any one respect the least token of anger or of scorn.

With this the affair passed from my mind, and I was beginning to give the old soul credit for more sense than I had imagined her to possess; and already, from this feeling, had made a considerable step nearer to liking her than I had done yet.

With these impressions, as the sun went down, we proceeded, as we had often done before, to walk in the gardens of the villa, and when nearly dusk, my companion turned into a secluded alley of orange trees, in which I had before been, though not with sufficient frequency, to remember its localities.

Engaged in the subject of our conversation, I paid little or no attention to the path, when suddenly missing my step, I distinctly felt my treacherous companion give me a push, and down I fell through an opening in the ground, but whither I knew not.

The sense of horror thus produced was sufficiently awful, but when my fall was terminated by a plunge in some deep body of water, that resounded with a stunning noise throughout the sullen echoes of a seemingly vast cavern, the effect produced on the mind was truly dreadful.

On rising to the surface, after the first immersion, it instantly occurred to me that I had fallen into one of the immense tanks or reservoirs, of which in Malta such numbers are hewn out of the solid rock in all directions, to guard against the scarcity of water, in an island that has, or is supposed to have, no springs.

As this conviction took possession of my mind, it was with a degree of the utmost loathing and repugnance; and though I scarcely could say why, I expected every instant to feel the slimy touch of the vilest reptiles twining about me, in a body of water that had remained stagnant, as it were, for years.

Looking up at the aperture through which I had fallen, there was just visible, in the dim light, the diabolical features of the wretched creature to whom I owed this refined piece of cruelty.

"In future," said she, with an expression of unsurpassable malignity, "you will know what it is to reject a woman."

"You surely cannot mean to keep me here?" I cried,

"No!—In truth, when you can get out, you may, but to my thinking, the sooner your mind is made up to dispense with your confessor, the better."

So truly awful did such an end appear, that, raising my voice to the utmost, I shouted the name of Jeremy, in hopes that he might, by some lucky accident, be loitering in the gardens.—Nothing replied to me but the horrible reverberations of the dismal place, beyond which my voice seemed unable to rise,—while, with a look of hellish exultation, the detestable hag rolled the stone over the mouth of the tank, and left me to the agony of despair.

CHAPTER XLII.

Which shows how I found some traces of humanity even in this desolate place.

NOTHING of anguish that I ever knew, either from experience or recital, came up to the suffering I endured in this execrable place.

I could not make my mind up to sink without a struggle, and yet I saw no single possibility of effecting an escape. More from that instinct which naturally leads us to preserve life, than from any other motive, I continued swimming round the steep sides of the cavern, vainly endeavouring to ascertain its extent, or to find any ledge on which to crawl and repose myself.

Occasionally a transitory hope would steal upon me, that the revengeful wretch would not take my life, and after what she might consider a sufficient space of torment would return.

This feeling for some time kept me up, but as the minutes stole away, the suspense became heart-rending. Again I swam round, and again I listened; again I tried distinctly to go over the reasons for or against her thus leaving me to perish, and again all was uncertain and indistinct as before.

At length, in what appeared to be one of the distant corners of the tank, and so high above the surface, that I could scarcely reach it, my fingers did indeed discover a ledge, such as I sought, but of what extent I knew not. Drawing myself up with all my remaining strength, I got just high enough to know that it was sufficient to allow me to lie down, and then, at the very instant I had formed this conjecture, my hold slipped, and I fell once more into the water.

Eleven times successively did I make this attempt to suc-

ceed, and at the last accomplished it; but so faint, so weary, so utterly worn out had I become, that I could only stretch myself along the cold rock, and know that sense was leaving me.

How long I remained thus, of course I knew not. On the return of animation, my limbs were so cold and stiff that it was with the utmost difficulty I could move. My wet clothes and the dismal darkness and air of the vault at once brought back to my remembrances the frightful situation in which I was placed.

Musing to consider what resources were left to one so utterly betrayed, I remembered that I had about me a small box in which I carried opium. By extreme good fortune, this happened to be nearly full, and thankful that I had this sheet-anchor, on which to depend, I took a full dose, and being soon sensible of its invigorating effects, began to feel about me.

I now discovered that I was sitting on the last of a flight of steps. The tumult of hope that this excited in my bosom was, indeed, beyond every thing, but it was soon at an end, for on ascending three stairs, I found myself at the end of a low vaulted passage. On the third stair my foot struck against some curiously sounding object—fancy my loathing and dismay when, stooping down, my fingers distinctly traced a human skeleton. The body was laid along the passage, and the head was declining down the steps towards the water.

“I am not the only victim!” said I, sorrowfully leaning back against the wall, and relinquishing my hold on the wretched remains. As I did so, the skull, loosened from its ligaments by age and decay, slowly rolled down the stairs step by step, and fell with a sullen splash into the large volume of water, over whose dead surface the sound undulated dismally for some minutes, then once more subsided in calm.

Strange, almost incredible as it may appear, yet when the sounds ceased, I felt as if in the sunken skull I had already lost a newly found friend.

After the first horror of such a discovery was over, it seemed a link, however frightful, with that former world of which I was still a part, although a dissevered one, and I lingered by the side of the bones some minutes before I had courage to proceed.

Arising once again from my miserable seat, I carefully

examined as far as practicable, every inch of ground, before I ventured on a single step, for amidst all my distresses there was nothing which I so greatly dreaded as a plunge into a second tank, my meeting with which, to my excited imagination, seemed probable enough.

After proceeding some short distance, I came to recesses in the walls on either side of me, which on exploring I found to be filled with human bones. This at once told me that I was wandering in the catacombs, and that the skeleton with which I had first met was most probably that of one of the many unfortunates who had lost their way, in these caverns, and that in all likelihood, perishing of hunger and of thirst, he had been searching out the reservoir of water, and died while yet on the steps that led to it.

From this also I concluded, that when the tank into which I had fallen, contained its proper quantity of water, the surface would not be so much below the stairs as I had found it, but on a level with them.

CHAPTER XLIII.

Which shows how I obtained a guide.

GAINING in some degree fresh courage from knowing even the loathsome spot where I then was, and feeling moreover greatly influenced by the quantity of opium I had taken, as well as the fact that it was now the hour at which I ordinarily retired to rest, I lay down, and more thankful and confident of heart than it is easy to imagine a human being under such circumstances, I fell fast asleep.

On awaking, after many hours spent in slumber, I expected to find myself convulsed with aches, cramps, and rheumatisms of every description, but in this I was pleasurabley disappointed; for such is the effect of necessity on the human frame, I could not have felt less from such complaints had I slept on the most luxurious of couches, instead of being wet through, and lying on the humid earth without the slightest covering, and with the mouldering fragments of my species, lying on every side of me.

Thinking it would be as well to provide myself with some weapon, in case the rats, from some mistake, should be in a neighbourhood where they surely could have nothing to prey on except one another, I took the liberty of borrowing for the present, the longest thigh-bone that I could find among the plentiful heaps around me; and thus appropriately armed, I once more proceeded.

Winding after winding I passed, and still with unweared determination pursued my path. After rambling thus for some time, without seemingly attaining any results, or being in the least degree nearer my deliverance, I began to recollect how many cases I had heard of people who, having imprudently advanced too far into the catacombs, had there become lost in their interminable windings, and perished horribly.

If such is to be my lot, thought I, would it not have been better to have sunk quietly into the horrid tank that first received me? Yet in this there was something so abhorrent, I thought I could almost prefer to bear the pangs of starvation.

That in this respect I did not speak altogether unadvisedly, may be readily imagined. Indeed the pangs of hunger soon became most severe. In this emergency I had still no resource but the opium, which not only allayed the gnawing of want, but produced those exhilarating effects which for a time defied even starvation itself to crush their joyous feelings.

This over, I would get up and walk; but I began at length to fear that I might have got into a certain circle of windings, and thus might wander on for ever. Thirst also oppressed me dreadfully, and my stock diminished to not more, than a few hours farther would consume.

Thus brought again within the alarming grasp of a frightful death, I laid down to ponder over and over every possible scheme by which I had any chance to free myself. Suddenly my musings were interrupted by a sound.

I listened—could I be correct? It was so—I heard the sound of some animal breathing. The perspiration stood upon my brow, as I heard it approaching the spot where I lay, and snuffing the air which communicated to him the fact of my presence.

Soon I distinctly saw two glowing eyes. I tried to move, but my limbs were no longer at my own bidding. The animal approached—walked round my body—I felt its cold nose touch me, still I lay as though part of the insensate rock.

In another instant I felt the sharp tusk of the intruder pierce my thigh. This effectually dissolved the spell. Springing up and seizing the thigh-bone that I had by me, I struck the creature a most severe blow on the head which felled it to the ground. Looking upon it as a most merciful supply for my extreme want, I began by feeling, to find out if possible, what animal I had killed.

I soon came to the conclusion that I had killed no animal, since the one now in my power was only stunned, and to the best of my belief was a jackal. This at once set me thinking.

This fellow, said I, must have some communication with the world above. If I could only persuade him to show it

to me in return for sparing his life, it certainly would be a pity to destroy a creature possessed of a secret so valuable to my existence.

Resolving at any rate to try the experiment of getting the truth out of my friend, I drew forth my pocket-handkerchief, fastened it securely round his loins and tail, and tying the other end to my finger, awaited till my gentleman should get up and bestir himself. Mr. Jackal did not keep me long in suspense, but finding himself under equivocal circumstances, he no sooner regained perfect animation, than he started to his feet and made off.

Though I could not indulge him by going quite so fast as he wished, I nevertheless followed him very nimbly. At first he was somewhat refractory, notwithstanding the band about his loins, but my good thigh-bone soon beat a very respectable portion of sense into these, and on we proceeded. Occasionally, too, my good fellow got into a hole, from which I had great difficulty in dislodging him, and then not without some severe bites.

At length I began to be sensible of fresher air. Delightfully did it play on my fevered temples; after the charnel atmosphere I had just quitted, my lungs seemed scarcely able to inhale enough of it. With every passing moment this feeling increased, till at length we came to some ascending ground, that might once have been a flight of steps, and threading intricacies that I should scarcely ever have been able to get through alone,—we emerged among some ruins.

The morning was about to break into life; as the sky first met my eye, clear, cloudless, and transparent, where the eastern horizon met the sea. With exquisite joy did I gaze once more around, and think from what a death I had been rescued.

Much did I long to take with me, and preserve to the last moment of life, the animal whose sagacity had effected my deliverance; but when I beheld the poor creature shrinking with abhorrence from the light, and struggling to get free, I thought it would be a much more grateful reward to give him his glorious liberty; unloosening the ties of my handkerchief, and bestowing on him a farewell caress, the creature bounded forward, and in another moment was hid from my sight among the ruins.

CHAPTER XLIV.

Shows how to catch a tartar at sea.

WHAT sort of effect my imprisonment had produced on my features, I knew not—on my person the disorder was not less extreme than ridiculous.

Troubling myself little on this score, I hastened to our town-quarters, which I had been unfortunate enough to leave, for the villa of the French knight.

Here, with a face so long, that it might well have reached from one end of the catacombs to the other, I found Jeremy. At first he did not know me, so cadaverous had my countenance become.

Hastening to take a bath and some refreshment, I soon communicated my story to the man of honesty, and then sent him off to find some vessel about to sail that afternoon.

Taught by my experience, I thought it not impossible, that sooner than allow me to be at liberty to speak of her little kindnesses, the damsel who had failed to drown me, might go to the expense of five shillings to get me the favour of a stiletto.

The only vessel whose destination was at all to my mind, was an English man-of-war with a convoy for the port of Alexandria. Having procured a free passage through the kindness of the captain, I quickly transferred to her timbers the charge of myself and servant. I did not even care to take leave of my friend the French knight; but on the contrary, thought it one of the best things I had managed for some time, when on the ensuing—I found myself fairly outside Valetta Harbour.

The ship on board of which I now found myself very kindly accommodated, was His Majesty's Ship, the Eagle.

Though a vessel of no great size, her appointments were all in that neat and effective order which distinguishes the English navy from that of every other nation.

Our convoy amounted to seven and twenty vessels of various tonnage and rates of sailing, who scattered round us with all their canvass spread, and gently gliding before a favourable breeze, resembled a flock of well grown goslings, exploring the dangers of their parent pool, under the protection of a gray old gander in the middle.

For the first two days, while this weather continued, we kept our charge in very good order, regularly counting as many in the morning as we had bid good evening to, the night before.

The wind heading us, however, the different speeds of the ships became apparent. To some, signals were addressed, to others—either refractory or dull—a cannon-ball was sent hissing a little wide of its mark, while not unfrequently we were obliged to shorten sail, that the more dull sailors might come up with us.

As the night came on, the ships were made to keep more closely together, while we sailed round and amidst them. This was done to ward off the attacks of the enemy's privateers, who were occasionally seen hovering upon the outskirts of our charge.

To one of these subtle foes our attention was called in particular. Commanded by an enemy of equal courage and penetration, all our efforts at catching him proved unsuccessful.

Constantly on the flank of our convoy, he was never taken, though always ready, should the opportunity occur, to pounce down on a straggling or weakly manned ship.

The largest and most valuable vessel under our charge happened also to be the slowest. No sooner, therefore, at night, was this good craft astern of the convoy, crowding all canvass to keep up, than, just far enough from her, to keep safe from our clutches, came the privateer, watching only for some moments' pause in our vigilance, to bear down like a hawk on the object of his desires.

Often did we give this daring fellow chase, but in vain. At length the following trap was laid for him. Considerable pains having been taken by means of side-cloths to disguise the different paintings of the two ships, the trader, as soon as evening came on, was by agreement sent a-head to

lead the convoy; having her topsail-yards lowered down and squared upon the caps.

The man-of-war, on the other hand, with the painted canvass hanging over her side to conceal the port-holes, her top-gallant masts partly struck, and her yards and rigging disordred and disguised as much as possible, showed an enormous quantity of sail below and aloft, as if for the purpose of keeping up with her companions.

Previously, however, we had sunk astern, a large square studding sail, to act as the most complete backwater, thus making a considerable noise and rendering it utterly impossible that any spread of canvass could take her much a-head. No sooner did the privateer behold, as he imagined, the object of his longings thus temporarily cut off from the protection of the convoy, than he silently edged down towards us.

Concluding, from the little notice taken of him, that he had cleverly contrived to elude the vigilance of the man-of-war a-head, and that on board us, as is not unfrequently the case with traders, every soul was asleep save the man at the helm, he made no more ado, but running close alongside, thought to pour his boarders on our deck, and settle the matter very briefly.

Scarcely, however, were his yard-arms interlocked with ours, than the painted side-cloths were removed, and such a broadside rattled into him, as must fairly have satisfied him of the mistaken nature of his addresses.

He would now very quietly and willingly have sheered off, but that was not permitted. The ships' yards were already lashed together, a resistless force of man-of-war's men poured upon the bulwarks of the privateer, and after a faint and ineffectual struggle, she became our prize.

CHAPTER XLV.

Which is clearly the shortest chapter in my life.

Rejoicing not a little at the success of our scheme, the majority of the prisoners were at once received on board the man-of-war, and a crew having in their place been sent into the prize, she received orders to accompany us on our voyage, and help to convoy those very vessels which but the day before it had been her object to plunder. Such are the fortunes of war.

Considering that at the time I was compelled to take such an unceremonious cold bath, I was a nervous invalid, I naturally imagined that on the consequent excitement subsiding, my illness would have returned with redoubled violence. Strange to say, from that time forward, I never had the least return of it.

Three or four nights' undisturbed repose restored me to an infinitely better state of health than I had enjoyed for some months, while the narrow escape of my life that I had so recently experienced, enabled me to view my humble two thousand a-year with a vast deal of satisfaction—that is comparatively speaking, since we sages of the earth always speak by this good figure.

Without any farther interruption of our voyage than that resulting from a long calm, we safely arrived in Alexandria, which city I determined to make my head quarters, while I prosecuted my rambles in various directions from, and around it.

CHAPTER XLVI.

Which includes an important epoch in my life.

HAVING, from the time mentioned in the last chapter, chiefly occupied my time in travelling among the eastern nations, my adventures became, naturally, of too desultory a description to require insertion here. Not to say that these histories would thereby be extended to nearly twice their present extent. I have two very sufficient reasons for passing slightly over this period of my records, and coming to that which more properly forms their termination.

These, after the ample notice given to the learned and sedate Priors, for whom these passages in my life were first compiled, cannot in the least degree be censured.

The reasons which have decided me on this course are these:—First, having, with greater accuracy than is herein attempted, written at full length my travels in these countries, and my opinions thereon, I am unwilling to break up their originality, by transmitting any mutilated copy of the same to the records of a society, the members of which may be all changed since the pleasant times of our meeting; and secondly, having, in my intercourse with the various disciples of the Mohammedan religion, seen what to me appeared very sufficient reason for adopting this creed, together with turban and rites of its children, I feel that when addressing my memoirs to the learned and sedate Priors of Prague, it would be but a questionable compliment to dwell on scenes and motives which led me to the abandonment of a faith I received at the hands of a Grand Prior of their Order. Moreover, as after this latter conversion to Moslemism, my adventures are naturally inseparable from many parts of this faith, it would be but bad taste to narrate that, which might offend others of a contrary opinion, or to lay open those

whose mode of belief I have adopted, to the sneers of those whose tenets I have abjured.

Once for all, it will suffice to say that, notwithstanding all the pains and erudition of the Grand Prior, some scruples still remained upon my mind, and that after painful and deep deliberation, I adopted those doctrines which appeared to me most consonant to nature, and the position therein held by man.

In conclusion, I would admit how perfectly I am aware of my liability to error, and would wish that no man should follow my example, who can by any possibility avoid it—for at the conclusion of a varied life, I must confess, that I have gone greatly out of my road to subject myself to sorrows, which few men are ordinarily called upon to encounter.

After some years spent in wandering in the East, I returned to Italy—and here I shall take leave to correct a report somewhat reflecting on my character. It has been asserted, that previous to my leaving Egypt, I despatched the Danish consul on a fool's errand to Constantinople, and that this gentleman, on arriving at the Sublime Porte, discovered no one was less wanted there than himself. On this, it was said, in no pleasant mood of mind he set off to return to his consulship, but that once more reaching Alexandria, he discovered that I in the interval had sailed for Europe, whither I had also escorted his wife.

Now I do positively say, that these reports are the result of the tongues of the evil-minded. It is true, there were some little passages between the consul and myself, but these—out of delicacy to my friend—it is not worth while to reveal.

I now took up my abode at Venice, where my time was devoted chiefly to reading, and philosophy, and the education of an only son of colour, Fortunatus, by name; so called from the happy benignity, that blessed me on my travels with this stay of my old age.

It was while residing at Venice that I learned with considerable satisfaction, and of course all due regret, that Mrs. Wortley Montague was at length defunct. As I considered it my duty not to forgive the steps that had deprived of my fortune, myself, and creditors,—Moses, and the rest, I at once took steps for putting in practice the plan I first formed on reading the will of my father.

For this purpose, I despatched Jeremy forthwith to Eng-

land, directing him to advertise that a gentleman of some attainments and fortune, would be happy to wed any widow or single lady who, possessed of good manners, would be likely to bring him an heir within three or four months.

Tidings have since then reached me, that a lady answering these demands has presented herself, and that my faithful valet is even now escorting her on the road over-land. As I cannot but have the most grateful feelings for services so constant as his, I hereby make the following will to reward him and others of my friends. On the arrival of my future wife, we shall forthwith be married, and on the birth of my child return to England, where, after so many delays, it is my serious and earnest intention to effect those reformations which I begin to feel I have talked of too long, and practised too little.

This is the meanest of all
in a man established, and the
Author never ought to write
such a line in his life again
— or forever

MY LAST WILL.

I, EDWARD WORTLEY MONTAGUE, being of the same sane mind that I have displayed all my life, do now on the third day of January, 1776, make my last will and testament.

In the first place, I give to my beloved son—of colour—Fortunatus, four hundred pounds a year for life, as secured by papers hereunto annexed.

Item, to my most faithful servant, Jeremy, surnamed the Honest, whom I have ever loved as a brother—and much better than my sister—I bequeath a similar annuity of two hundred pounds, secured in like manner.

Item, to my noble and worthy relation, the Earl of — I give the following legacies:—

First, I give to his lordship my bay mare, possessed of no fault on earth, except being somewhat gone in the wind, slightly sprained, troubled with springhalt, broken of two knees, and wall-eyed. This matchless creature I bestow on his lordship, that, when deserted by his Majesty's favour, he may notwithstanding be Master of the Horse.

Item, I do *not* give to his lordship any thing farther of my property, because the best part of that, he has contrived to take already.

Item, to Sir Francis — I here give one word of mine, because I know that as yet he has never had the good fortune to keep his own.

Item, to Lord — I also give nothing—the which legacy I give him, because I know that he'll bestow it on the poor.

Item, to the Duke of * * I give all my young hawks, which I have been lately rearing; begging his grace to take especial care of them, since it is the duty of the great to protect the little.

Item, to ***, who has put me in his travels, I leave five shillings for his wit; undeterred by the charge of extravagance, since those who have read his book, consider that five shillings is too much.

Item, to Sir Robert **, I leave my political opinions, never doubting he will have little difficulty in *turning* them into cash; he having always hitherto found such an excellent market in which to *change* his own.

Item, to the gentlemen who formed the last administration, I give my pointer bitches, Brandy and Snap, so that being affectionate mothers, they may never again want puppies.

Item, my cast off habit of swearing oaths, I give and bequeath to Sir Leopold D_____, in consideration, that no oaths have ever been able to bind him yet.

Item, I give my character to Junius, being fond of science in general, and dissection in particular.

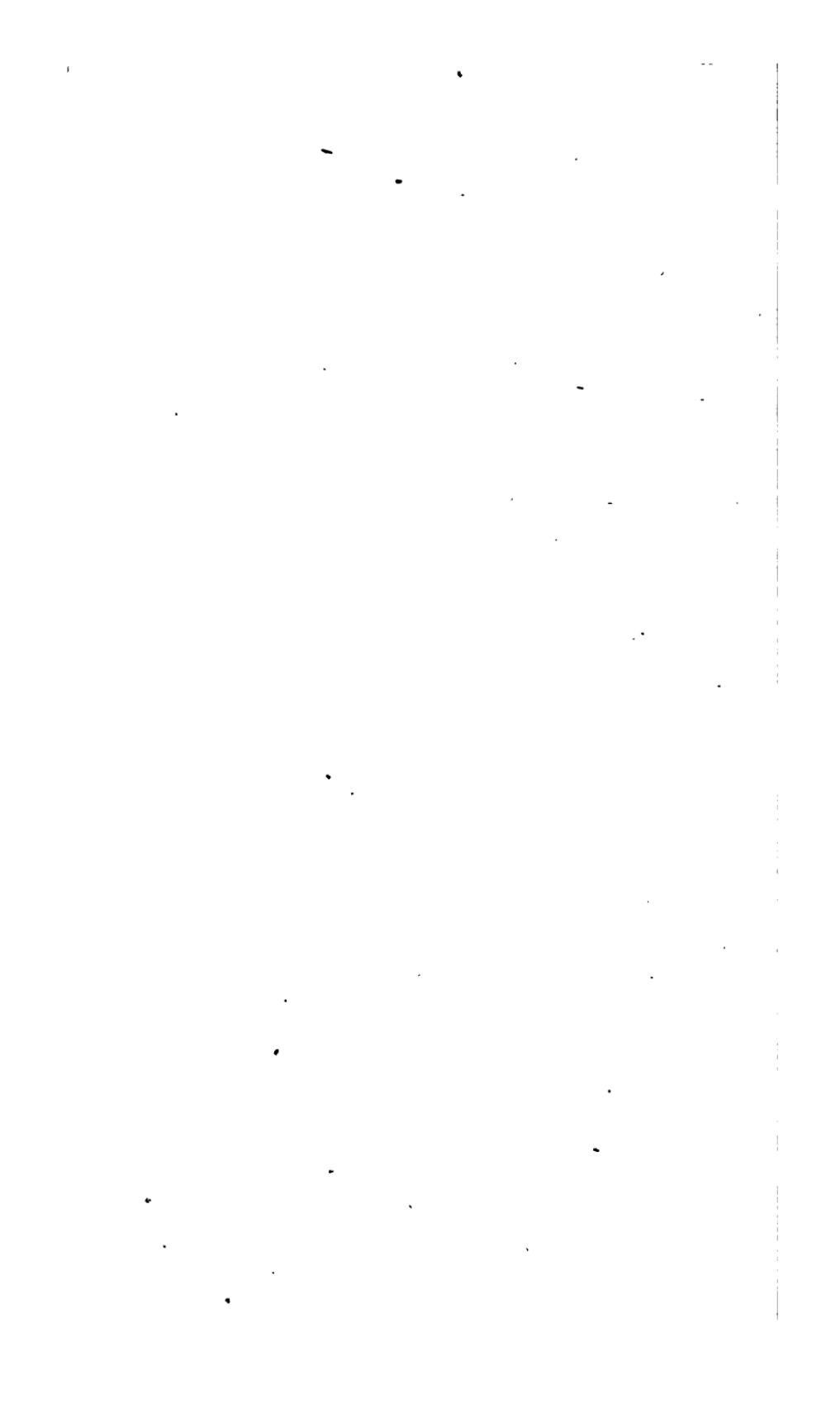
Item, I give my body to that great saint, Sir Anthony Allgrace, hearing as I do, that he deals largely in soup for the poor.

Lastly, I give to the world my solemn assurance, that the above generosities form the last of my extravagances, and that henceforth being once more respectably married, it is my unalterable determination to become a reformed man, and real ornament to society.

As witness my hand, the day and year above written.

EDWARD WORTLEY MONTAGUE.

POSTSCRIPT.



TO THE READER.

Most worthy reader, thou hast indeed seen the last of Wortley Montague! Well indeed had that respected, but peculiar, gentleman planned the reformation of life, put off from year to year. But the blight that has fallen upon nobler spirits, for ever came between him and the realization of an object, the only blameable part of which, was the delay that postponed it.

While yet his intended wife was on her route, as some say, while yet the very ship that contained her was in sight, from Venice, there, in that city, expired—from choking at his own table—Wortley Montague; an instance, as striking as lamentable, of the truth of the Roman's lines:—

*“Rusticus exspectat, dum defluit amnis; at ille,
Labitur et labetur, in omne volubilis œcum.”*

Well may we here say in the equally forcible words of one, whose writings will for ever ornament our language—

“This relation will not be wholly without its use, if those, who languish under any part of his sufferings, shall be enabled to fortify their patience, by reflecting that they feel only those afflictions from which the abilities of Savage did not exempt him; or if those, who, in confidence of superior capacities or attainments, disregard the common maxims of life, should be reminded, that nothing will supply the want of prudence, and that negligence and irregularity, long continued, will make knowledge useless, wit ridiculous, and genius contemptible.”

To those who may be in any way descendants of this eccentric individual, we will simply say that we hope they inherit his undoubted abilities, while, for his errors, as from

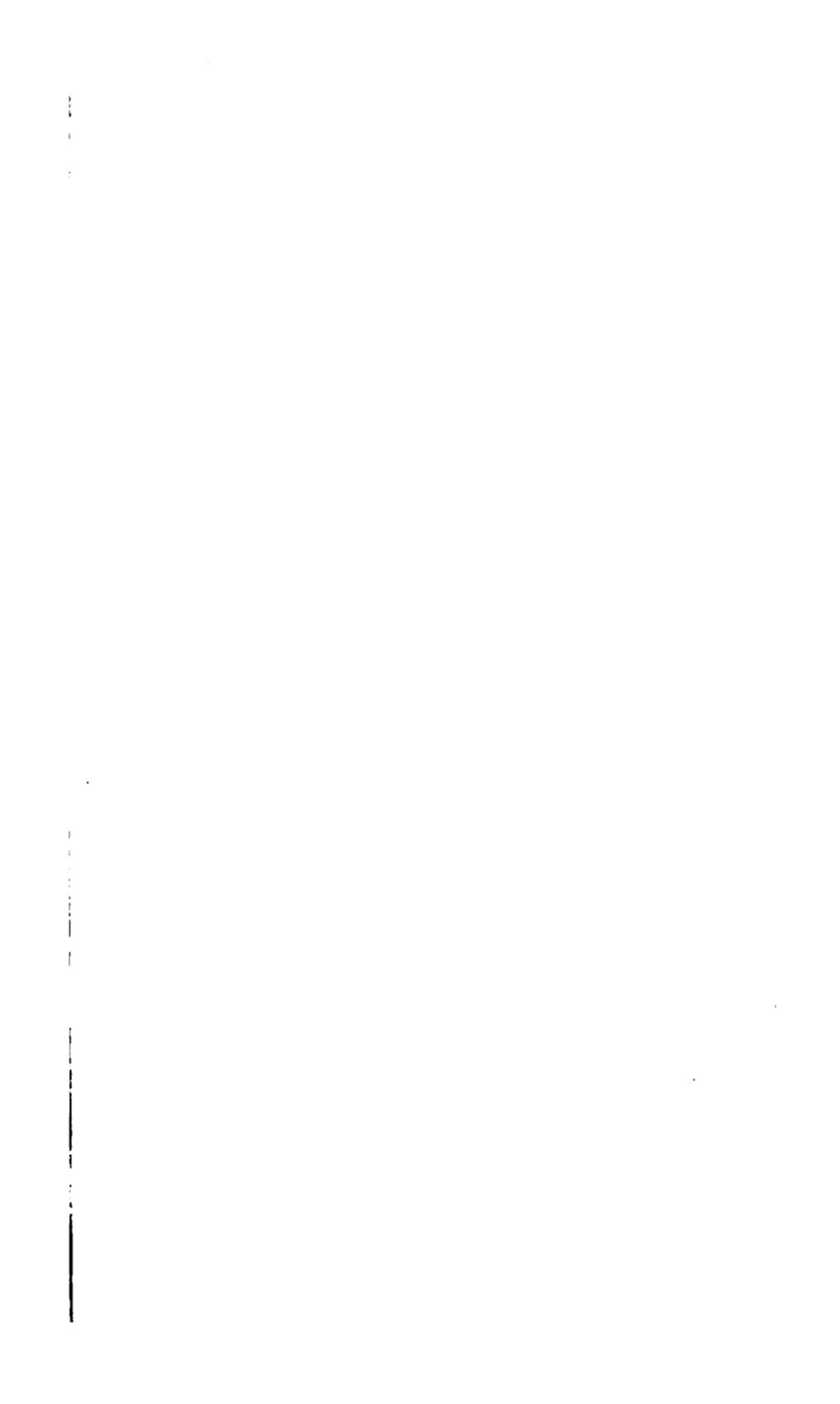
these none are free, so neither at this distance of time can they be regarded as any sort of reproach, or indeed aught but part of that history, which forms the public floating capital of biography.

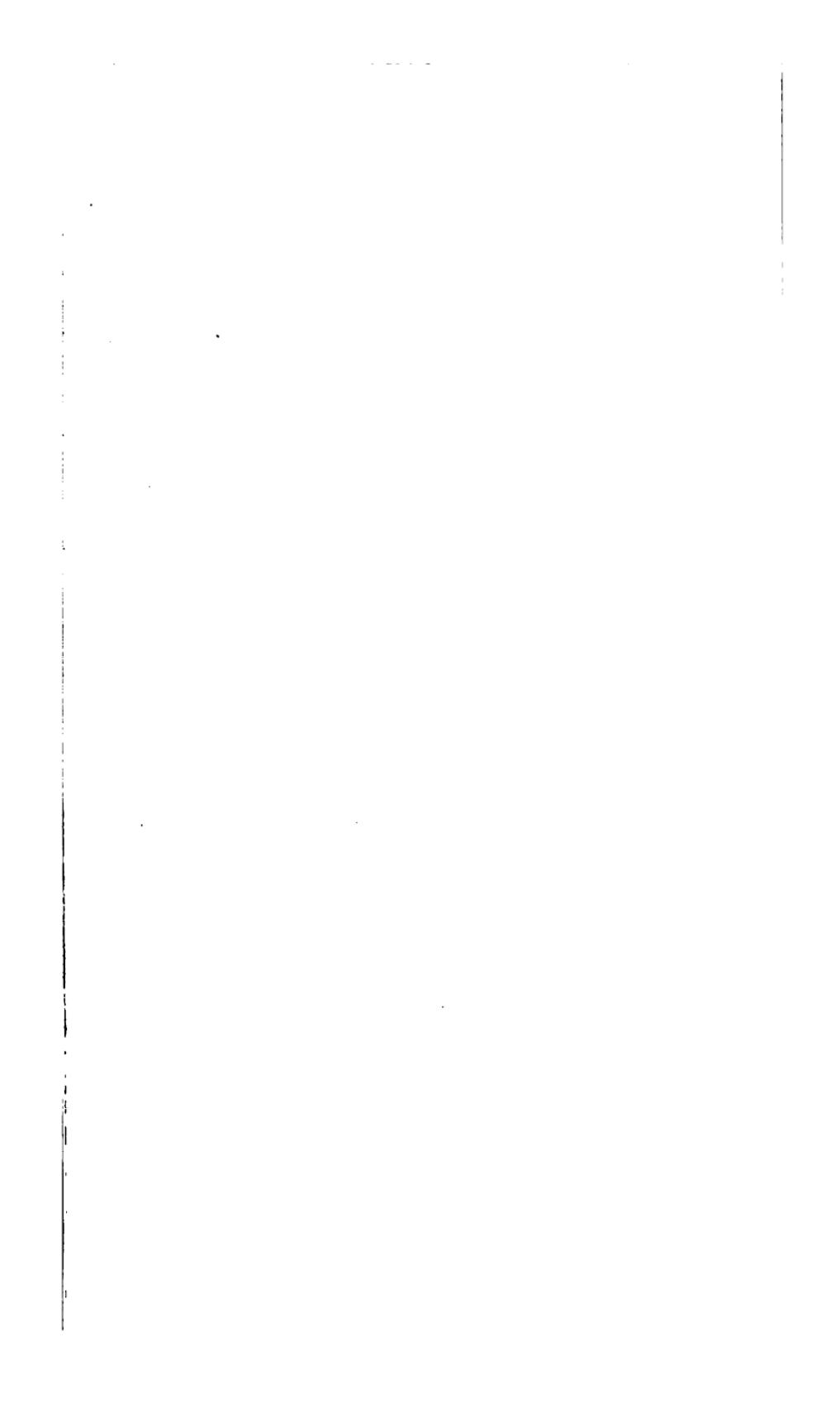
To this what could we add more? Truly the bane and antidote are both before thee. The ill-directed life, and the pointed moral it conveys. As thy own will shall guide thy steps, so will the result be proved by thee—the bitter or sweet; no eloquence can seduce thee if inclined to the one, or allure thee, if bent to the other; but in witnessing the follies of others, effects are communicated to the mind, which it is past the powers of language to convey.

PRIORS OF PRAGUE.

THE END.

Hm
eH







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